

0 4 5 0

ANGLO-INDIAN POLICY

DURING AND SINCE

THE

AFGHAN WAR.

BY FREDERICK HOLME, M.A.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

1845.

PREFACE.

THE articles forming the following series appeared, at intervals of a year, from 1839 to 1844, in *Blackwood's Magazine*. They were commenced at the period when the alarm felt by our Indian rulers at the scarcely-disguised machinations of Russia on the side of Persia, and the attitude of open hostility assumed by the latter power, was on the point of precipitating them into a war of aggression in Afghanistan, inevitable, perhaps, at the moment, but rendered so only by their own previous mismanagement. The success of our arms at first exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine. Afghanistan was overrun in a single campaign, and a vassal monarch placed on the throne, while the not less unexpected failure of the formidable armament despatched from Orenburg against Khiva, put an end at once to our apprehensions, and to the schemes of Russia in that quarter, which do not appear to have been since resumed. The necessity for the retention of Afghanistan, according to the views of our policy as originally declared, now no longer existed:—but no symptom was shown of any intention to relinquish this useless and burdensome conquest, till in the winter of 1841-2, our army of occupation was overwhelmed and almost completely cut off by a national insurrection, the suddenness and secrecy of which found a parallel only in the blindness and security of our own authorities, both in Cabul and Calcutta. At

this moment of extremest peril, Lord Auckland returned to England to enjoy the honours which had been conferred on him in the first *éclat* of his triumphs, leaving to his successor the thankless task of restoring to order the political chaos which he had created. How this task was performed by Lord Ellenborough would be best shown (it might be supposed) by a comparison of the present state of India with that in which Lord Auckland left it;—but with the same facts before them, the Court of Directors and her Majesty's Government have arrived at diametrically opposite conclusions—and the merits of the case will probably undergo discussion in the approaching session of Parliament.

These papers have, therefore, been republished in a collected form at this juncture, when public attention is forcibly drawn to the recent administration of India, as furnishing some data which may afford comparative views of the different phases through which that important part of our empire has passed during the last six years, and their bearings relatively on each other. The author has throughout confined himself as far as possible to the statement of facts as they then existed, avoiding political theories and party bias; and if he has in any degree succeeded in rendering intelligible the multifarious complication of Anglo-Indian politics since the commencement of the Afghan war, his exertions will not have been altogether in vain.

F. H.

January, 1845

ANGLO-INDIAN POLICY.

I.—PERSIA, AFGHANISTAN, AND INDIA.

(Published in January, 1839.)

FROM the day when the Emperor Paul uttered his insane threat of marching an army of Cossacks from Orenburg to India, the designs entertained by Russia on our Eastern possessions, and the dangers to be apprehended in that quarter in the event of a war, have furnished a fertile topic of gloomy ratiocination to that class of alarmists, the constant tendency of whose speeches and writings has been to exalt the power and resources of the Muscovite empire as contrasted with our own; and, while loudly proclaiming the unbounded ambition and encroaching policy of that power, to deprecate any attempt at an opposition, which could only draw down on our heads the irresistible vengeance of the Northern colossus. Sir Robert Wilson, in 1817, and Colonel De Lacy Evans, in 1829, stood pre-eminent above the rest for the confidence with which they predicted an expedition of the Russians against India, and the ruinous consequences which must inevitably result to our Oriental rule; while the opposite side of the question was sustained by the *Quarterly Review*, which contended, in ably-argued articles, that (even if the limited finances and cautious policy of Russia were not sufficient guarantees against her embarking in so Quixotic an expedition) the march of 2000 miles from Orenburg to Delhi, the impossibility of transporting guns and stores across the deserts of

Turkistan, the want of provisions and water, and the unceasing hostility of the Turkoman tribes, would be a sufficient security that the invading army, if it ever reached our Indian frontier at all, could arrive there in no other condition than that of a diminished and exhausted remnant, destitute of supplies or artillery, and ready to fall an instant and easy prey to the numerous and effective Anglo-Indian forces which would encounter it. The total failure of the missions of Mouraviev to Khiva, in 1819, and of Negri to Bokhara, in 1820, by means of which the cabinet of Petersburg attempted to open more intimate and friendly relations with these Uzbek sovereignties, showed that the opposition to be expected in that quarter, at least, had not been overrated; while the equally rooted hostility and superior power of Persia appeared to interpose a still more effectual barrier to the route by the west of the Caspian. The friendly relations of Russia with Great Britain, and the improbability of her severing them for the doubtful chance of a remote and precarious conquest, were severally set forth and insisted on; and the result of all these arguments was, that most of our domestic politicians, after verifying the geographical positions laid down in the *Quarterly*, by a glance at the map of Asia, remained in a comfortable conviction that there was little fear of East India stock being frightened from its propriety, during the lives of the present generation, by the apparition of the Russian Eagle on the Indus.

But these reasonings, however well founded they may have been fifteen years ago, have, in the present day, ceased to be applicable; for, by an unfortunate perversity, while the warnings of the alarmist writers above alluded to, and the solid facts which they adduced in support of them, fell almost unheeded on the public ear, the inconsistent policy of forbearance and concession to Russia, which was advocated as the only means of diverting the storm, has been scrupulously acted upon by each successive ministry, and has been rewarded by a series of insults and indignities, increasing in due proportion to the tameness with which they were acquiesced in. When the Russian Emperor, in 1828, on finding that the obstinate valour of the Ottomans was not so easily overborne as he had expected,

instituted a naval blockade of the Dardanelles (after having solemnly waived the rights of a belligerent in the Mediterranean; and received all due applause for his magnanimity), the indifference with which our government viewed the detention of British vessels, and the maltreatment of British seamen, gave Russia an assurance of impunity of which she was not slow to avail herself; and the secret encouragement given to the Pasha of Egypt, the consequent treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, the capture of the *Vixen*, and the late attempt to place a *вето* on the conclusion of the commercial treaty between England and the Porte, demonstrated in rapid succession to Europe the *moderation* of Russia, and the weakness or long-suffering of our foreign policy. In distant Persia, after her military power had been broken by the war which was terminated by the peace of Turkmanchai in 1828, the game of intervention was played even more openly; and no means were left untried to undermine and destroy the influence which a long alliance and constant diplomatic intercourse had procured for England at the court of Teheran. During the life of Futtch Ali Shah, however, the Russian counsels never openly gained the ascendancy. The wily old Kajar appreciated the sincerity of Russian treaties and promises too well to be cajoled by them; and his often-quoted answer to a proposition for improving the internal communications of his dominions, shows his clear insight into the motives which dictated it:—"The horses of the Irânis can go where the horses of their ancestors went; but if we make wide roads, the wheels of the infidels will be speedily seen traversing them." But, with the death of the old sovereign, and the accession of his inexperienced grandson, a change came over the spirit of Persian politics, and the flimsy veil which had covered the designs of Russia was instantly thrown aside. Scarcely four years have elapsed since this young monarch, assailed on all sides by the pretensions and revolts of his innumerable uncles and cousins, was placed in secure possession of the throne by the vigorous exertion of British arms and influence, under Sir Henry Bethune; and he has repaid these services, which might have secured the gratitude of even an Asiatic despot, by insulting the British minister, admitting Russian emissaries into his divan

and Russian troops into his capital, and lending himself as a willing tool to Russian intrigues, which, under the pretext of assisting Persia in the recovery of her ancient possessions in Khorassan, have for their real and scarcely veiled object the opening of a road through the Afghan and Sikh tribes to the British frontier in India. In furtherance of these views, Herat has been besieged by the forces of Persia, with the aid of Russian troops and artillery, under the direction of a Russian general; and had it fallen, would, of course, have been re-fortified and occupied, nominally for the Shah, by a Russian garrison, as an advanced stronghold and *place d'armes* from which, whenever the favourable opportunity should present itself, a Russo-Persian army might have advanced to the Indus, by the route which has been followed by every invader of India on the Asiatic side, from Alexander to Nadir Shah. In the intoxication of anticipated triumph, even the common forms of diplomatic courtesy towards England were violated; and Mr. Macneil found it necessary to break off all communication with the Persian court, and to quit the camp before Herat; while Mahommed Shah publicly declared that the capture of Herat would be only preliminary to a career of conquest which should rival the past achievements of Nadir, and carry the Persian arms once more in triumph to Delhi. In Europe, the language held by Russia and her agents was equally explicit: the *Augsburg Gazette*, after plainly avowing that the aim of the Russian operations in Persia was "the opening a road to the most vulnerable of the English possessions," gave the following lucid commentary on that text:—"England does not conceal from herself her weakness in the East Indies; she knows that on the day when the natives, better informed concerning their own interests, shall unite together in resistance, British dominion in Southern Asia will end. On the other hand, Russia also knows her task; she is aware, that to her is reserved to take the initiative in the regeneration of Asia; and it is this which explains the jealousy at present existing between the two powers." Surely this candid acknowledgment must be sufficient to convince the most determined believer in the infallibility of the *Quarterly*, that whatever might have been the case some years back, our Indian

empire requires at the present day some more effectual bulwark than either the hollow friendship still subsisting between the two powers, or the extent of desert interposed between the Siberian outposts and the Indus.

Let us, in the first place, examine of what real value are those geographical obstacles which have been so often referred to as placing insurmountable barriers in the way of a Russian march to India. The route by the east of the Caspian, by Khiva and Bokhara, requires little notice, since it is not likely that it will ever be attempted when a more commodious and easy road lies open ; but even here we may remark, that the desert of Kharasm, intervening between Khiva and Khorassan, and often represented as impassable by an army, was crossed in 1740 by Nadir Shah, with all his troops, stores, and artillery, when marching against Khiva, which he took, and put its Khan to death. But the Russian troops may be wafted on the long course of the Volga, from the heart of European Russia to Asterabad, the southernmost harbour of the Caspian ; the exclusive navigation of which sea with armed vessels was ceded, by the way, to Russia, by the peace of 1828 with Persia ; and from Asterabad to Herat, if the Persian territory be open to their passage, is a direct road of 450 miles, interrupted by no natural obstacle after the mountains of Mazanderan are crossed at the commencement of the march.

Asterabad, indeed, was once, attacked by Ahmed Shah Doorauni, the founder of the Afghan monarchy ; and if he had succeeded in annexing it to his empire, the whole distance from the Caspian to Sirhind, *within* the present British frontier at Loodiana, would have been included within the limits of his single kingdom. From Herat, the emporium of Central Asia, and the dépôt of the commerce between Cabul, India, Cashmere, Persia, Bagdad, &c., the road to India, by whatever route, is more beaten and accessible than the internal communication between many parts of the Russian empire ; and if Nicholas could once display his ensigns on its ramparts, he might inscribe over its gates, "the road to Hindostan," as confidently as his grandmother, Catherine II., placed the vaunting inscription, "The way from Moscow to Byzantium," over the southern portal of Kherson.

A military map of the route, "constructed topographically with great care, by Herat, Candahar, Ghizni, and Cabul, to Attock," was even shown to Burnes at Lahore, by M. Court, a French officer* in the service of Runjeet Singh; he "pointed out the best routes for infantry and cavalry," and stated, that "though he had encountered jealousy from the Raja, he had still managed to complete a broad belt of survey from Attock to our own frontier!" This route, though not quite direct, is the one which would most probably be taken by an invading army; and the whole distance to be traversed from Asterabad to Delhi, would thus be about 1500 miles, or *somewhat less than the distance from Paris to Moscow*. The halting-places are respectively distant from each other as follow:—from Asterabad to Herat, 450 miles—from Herat to Candahar, 290, through a country unencumbered with mountains, and principally along the valleys of the Furrakhrood and Helmund rivers—from Candahar by Ghizni to Cabul, about 230, the most mountainous part of the road—from Cabul to Attock on the Indus, 180—and thence through the Punjab, crossing three of its rivers, 180 miles more to Lahore or Amritsir—thence to Delhi, 270, crossing the two remaining rivers of the Punjab between Lahore and Loodiani. By turning from Candahar southwards towards Mooltan, three of the rivers of the Punjab might be avoided, but the distance would be rather greater—from Candahar to Mooltan, through the passes of the Suliman-Koh mountains, and over the Indus and Chenab, is 330 miles, and from Mooltan to Delhi 350. There is yet another route from Candahar, still farther to the south, by the confines of Seistan and Beloochistan, through a level country, and unobstructed by either mountains or rivers (except, of course, the Indus, which would be crossed near Shikarpoor); but the whole extent of this line passes through arid and uncultivated districts, destitute of provisions or water, being, in fact, a continuation of the great sandy desert of Kerman, where Alexander and his army suffered such hardships on their return from India—it has, however, been more than once traversed by Asiatic armies. This detailed itinerary may, perhaps, seem tedious to our readers, but it is only by such dry matter-of-fact statements that we can dispel the vague idea of trackless steppes

and immeasurable distances, which is popularly associated with the regions of the East, and which has led many to consider our Indian frontier as secure as if, like some of the kingdoms in the Arabian Nights, a hundred years' journey intervened between it and the nearest neighbouring state.

The tidings of the siege of Herat were at first received with apathy by the mass of fireside politicians in England, who, finding from their gazetteers that Herat was a city of Khorassan, and Khorassan a province of Persia, inferred nothing more than, the Shah was intent on chastising a rebellious portion of his own dominions; and it was by slow degrees that the public mind was forced to comprehend the fact, that our faithful allies, the Russians, were actively endeavouring, with every prospect of success, to subvert one of the bulwarks of India. The unceasing denunciations of the press have succeeded to a certain extent in undeceiving those, who, as long as we remained nominally at peace with Russia, and no Russian *army of the Indus* commenced its march with displayed banners across the desert, could not be persuaded that any real danger was to be apprehended from Russian machination. But open violence has never been the favourite game of Russia: she never advances to the assault of the citadel, till she has sapped and undermined the exterior defences: and it is before the walls of Herat that she has first emerged from the covered approaches which she has been for years silently constructing, even in the heart of the distant Birman empire, for the attack of Hindostan. Herat, in fact, is the Shumla, as the mountains of Afghanistan are the Balkan, of the exterior defences of India; and if we do not anticipate the Russians in the possession of them, they may, at no very distant period, complete the analogy by descending thence to the plains of Hindostan, and dictating, from within the walls of Delhi, as formerly at Adrianople, a treaty by which the power and territory to be possessed by the Lords of Calcutta shall be regulated by the good will and pleasure of the *White Khan* (as his Asiatic subjects call him) of Petersburg.

It is true that the gallant and successful resistance which the Heratees have unexpectedly made, has postponed, for the present, the further prosecution of these schemes of conquest; want of

provisions, and the false alarm of the approach of the forces of Bokhara to the relief of the besieged city, have compelled the Persian monarch to withdraw his troops, and retreat in disorder towards his capital, after a desperate but fruitless attempt to carry the place by storm, in which the assailants are said to have lost more than 2000 of their best men ; several Russian officers fell on this occasion,* and their heads were fixed on the ramparts of the city. The retreat of the Shah was probably hastened by the news of a revolt rumoured to have broken out in Shiraz and Western Persia, in favour of one of the princes who visited England in 1836, and who are now resident at Bagdad. Their partisans in those provinces, of which their father for many years held the viceroyalty, are known to be numerous, and disaffected to the rule of Mohammed Shah, whose unnatural alliance with the hereditary foes of the Persian faith and nation has alienated from him the bulk of the population ; and their hopes have been raised by the occupation, by an Anglo-Indian force, of the island of Karrack, which commands the harbour of Bushire, the principal port possessed by Persia on the Gulf. No detailed accounts, however, appear to have been hitherto received of the progress of the Persian revolters, or of the operations of the British troops subsequent to their establishment on Karrack ; but it is obvious that an unpopular monarch, returning from an unsuccessful expedition with a broken and dispirited army, and an empty treasury, could oppose little effectual resistance to the insurrection of a warlike population, headed by a former claimant to the throne, if the powerful aid of British discipline were thrown into the scale against him. It was perhaps the anticipation of such a crisis which led to the concentration of 50,000 Russian troops at Eriwan and along the frontier ; and if a request for aid in reducing his rebellious subjects, on the part of the reigning monarch, had once given a pretext for pouring them into Persia, Mohammed Shah, with

* Among these was an adventurer named Berowski, a Polish Jew by birth, who had long been employed in Egypt and elsewhere as an emissary of Russia, before his appearance in a military capacity. Some years since he presented himself to Sir J. Malcolm at Bombay, in search of employment, but was soon sent out of India. He then went to Persia, and was eventually killed before Herat.

his throne surrounded, and his people awed into allegiance by foreign bayonets, must necessarily have sunk thenceforward into as subservient a vassal of Russia as Stanislaus Poniatowski was in Poland. The events of the campaign in Khorassan, however, appear to have shaken his faith in Russian promises; and his wavering counsels have been determined by the news that an armament had been set on foot in India for the purpose of restoring the dethroned monarch of Cabul and Candahar, in place of the present chiefs of those provinces, who have lately become allies of Persia; and the effect of this alteration of policy has been the reopening of a friendly correspondence with Colonel Stoddart and Mr. Macneil; while, for the final adjustment of all differences, a Persian Ambassador has been despatched to London, and is said to have already reached Constantinople. If the cession of Bushire, or some other naval station on the Persian Gulf, should be made the price of the renewal of the ancient alliance on the part of Great Britain, the acquisition would be doubly valuable, as affording a position in the flank of the Persian monarchy in the event of a future rupture, and as a present means of facilitating our direct communication with India. The demand of some such compensation for the insults offered to the British name in the person of our minister, and the violation of treaties, could not be considered either unreasonable or exorbitant; and the fickle and headstrong temperament of Mahommed Shah does not hold out much hope of the permanence of any arrangement which does not include an adequate security against future aggression.

The originally avowed object of the late campaign against Herat, was simply the re-union of that city, and the part of Khorassan dependent on it, to the Persian monarchy, from which it had been separated at the rise of the Doorauni dynasty in Afghanistan, about the middle of the last century; but during the progress of the siege, ulterior schemes developed themselves, of such a nature and extent, as to justify the Government of India in despatching a powerful expedition, as we have already stated, against Cabul, in order to subvert the power of the Barukzye chiefs, and reinstate the ex-king, Shah Shooja, under British protection. The particulars of these schemes of parti-

tion concluded in the Persian camp, as far as they have transpired in Europe, were to the effect that Dost Mohammed Khan of Cabul, the most powerful of the Barukzye chiefs, should have the title of king of Cabul, and be placed in possession of great part of the territories formerly comprised in the Doorauni monarchy, as far as Balkh and Cashmere, on the north, and should be assisted in conquering the latter territory from Runjeet Singh; in consideration of which, Dost Mohammed pledged himself to interpose no opposition to the subjugation by Persia of Herat, Beloochistan, and Sinde; which extension of territory, if effected, would have carried the Persian frontier up to the Indus, and rendered it easy for any power in alliance with Persia to invade the Company's territories by the southernmost route; while the territories of Dost Mohammed would either have afforded a passage by the northern route, or have covered the flank of an army moving by the other. The intrigues of Russia were sufficiently evident in these arrangements; and it yet remains to be proved how far the restoration of the exiled king in Afghanistan, even if successful, will operate as a barrier to similar attempts in future; but if the adhesion of this warlike people to the British interest is effected, and their various tribes again united under a single monarch, they may be made, if properly supported, an almost impregnable barrier to any future invasion of India on the N.W. A sketch of the previous history and present political situation of these countries, whose names and positions on the map were almost unknown, previous to the late occurrences, to the majority of general readers in England, may be useful in elucidating their importance, both as an outlying defence to our frontier, and as a connecting link between the politics of Persia, Central Asia, and India.

The mountain country between Persia and India, marked in our maps as Cabul and Candahar, has been inhabited, from time immemorial, by the Afghans, a rude and warlike race, claiming, in their own traditions, to be descended from Saul, king of Israel. From these mountains descended the successive swarms of fanatic warriors, who, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries of our era, gradually reduced India under Moslem domination; and the throne of Delhi was filled for three hundred years by princes

of Afghan race, till their ascendancy was subverted by the house of Timur in the early part of the sixteenth century. For 200 years from this period, the Afghans of Cabul and Candahar were subject alternately to the courts of Delhi and Ispahan, occasionally availing themselves of their position between the two empires to re-assert a brief independence during a period of war and confusion; till in the reign of the last Soofavi king of Persia, Shah Hussein, an insult offered to the family of one of their chiefs by the Persian governor, led to the murder of the offender, and the revolt of all the Afghan tribes; and the spectacle of weakness and decay presented by the Persian monarchy encouraged them to assume the offensive. The capture of Ispahan, and the conquest of Persia by the Ghilji Afghans, and the scenes of carnage and desolation which followed, till their expulsion and subjugation by Nadir Shah, have been made familiar, by the pages of Hanway and Malcolm, to every reader of Oriental history. The Abdallis, another Afghan tribe, who had possessed themselves of Herat and its territory, also yielded to the Persian conqueror, who retook Herat in 1731, but retained most of the Abdalli chiefs in his service—his predilection for the Sooni sect leading him to surround himself principally with officers of that persuasion. On the assassination of Nadir, in 1747, (an event to which Persian jealousy of the favour shown to the Afghans is said to have greatly contributed,) Ahmed Khan Doorauni, one of the Abdalli chiefs, and head of the sacred clan of the Suddozyes, seized the opportunity of the panic and confusion to withdraw his troops from the Persian camp, and marching to Candahar, proclaimed himself king of Afghanistan, to which, two years afterwards, he re-united Herat and great part of Khorassan; the anarchy in which Persia was plunged preventing his encountering any effectual opposition. During a victorious reign of twenty-six years, the Afghan king five times invaded India, inflicted on Delli a second sack, even more severe than that it had experienced from Nadir, and routed the Mahrattas at Paniput with such fearful slaughter, that scarcely a fourth of their host of 80,000 men escaped from the battle and pursuit. At the death of Ahmed Shah, in 1773, his dominions comprehended, in addition to the territories already

enumerated, Balkh, Cashmere, Sind, and the Punjab: but with his life the power and prosperity of the Afghan monarchy may be considered to have terminated; and the usual course of degeneracy, discord, and decay, which seems inseparable from the history of an Asiatic dynasty, was run with more than usual rapidity. His indolent and luxurious son, Timur, was deficient in the energy and ability necessary for the preservation of union in his disjointed kingdom; in the course of his reign of twenty years, he lost Sind and others of the frontier provinces; and after his death, in 1793, the discords of his numerous sons precipitated the fall of the Doorauni dynasty. The short reign of his successor, Shah Zemaun, a weak and cruel prince, was rendered memorable by the wild scheme which he formed for invading India, subduing the Mahrattas and English, and recovering the ascendancy in that country, which had been held by his grandfather; but this enterprise was frustrated in the outset by the attacks which the Persians (now settled under the Kajar dynasty) began to make on his western frontier, and by the continual revolts of his half-brother, Mahmood, by whom he was at length dethroned and blinded in 1800. The rule of Mahmood was, however, unpopular, and, in little more than two years, he was expelled by a revolt of the populace of the capital against his Persian guards. Shooja-al-mulk, a uterine brother of Shah Zemaun, was now placed on the throne. The administration of this prince (the present ex-king) was marked by some ability and success; but the royal prerogative was greatly circumscribed by the power of the chieftains of the different clans, who had availed themselves of these fraternal contentions to regain the feudal authority of which the introduction of royalty had deprived them; civil wars also arose from the efforts of the Ghilji tribes to throw off the yoke of the Abdallis; and the rapid rise of the power of the Sikhs under the Rajah Runjeet Singh at length compelled the Afghans to evacuate the Punjab, and confine themselves to the right bank of the Indus. The state of the Cabul monarchy at this period is described in detail in Elphinstone's interesting narrative of his mission in 1808-9 to the court of Shooja; but scarcely had the embassy repassed the Indus, when the sovereign who had received it was driven from

his throne by one of the revolutions common in Asia, headed by Futteh Khan, the chief of the powerful clan of Barukzye, who restored Mahmood as nominal king, retaining the administration, under the title of vizier, entirely in his own hands. After nine years' precarious reign, Mahmood, with the co-operation of his son Kamran, rid himself of his powerful minister by murdering him under circumstances of great cruelty; but, finding himself unable to withstand the instantaneous revolt of the unfortunate vizier's numerous brothers and clansmen, pusillanimously abandoned his kingdom, and fled, with his treasures and crown jewels, to Herat, of which he had been governor in the lifetime of his father Timur. By acknowledging himself a vassal of Persia, he remained in undisturbed possession of this city and its territory till his death in 1829, when his son Shah Kamran, the late antagonist of the Persians, succeeded him.

The abdication of Mahmood left the throne at the absolute disposal of Azem Khan, who had succeeded his brother Futteh as chief of the Barukzye. He offered it, in the first instance, to Shah Shooja; and this prince, accordingly, left Loodiana, where he had for some time resided, in order to resume his crown; but having imprudently given offence to the nobles by some ill-timed acts of arrogance, he was compelled to return into exile before he had reached the camp; and Ayub, another prince of the Doorauni family, was invested with the empty title of king, having been previously in such a state of destitution, that the robe of honour, which he conferred on Azem Khan on installing him in the office of vizier, had been privately sent by the destined minister to the royal tents. The shadow of a kingdom, torn to pieces by civil war, and dismembered by the attacks of the Sikhs, continued, from this time, little more than four years, when it received a final blow from the decisive victory gained at Nushro in 1823 by Runjeet Singh, who led on his guards in person to the capture of the Afghan artillery. Azem Khan, who, from the opposite bank of the river of Cabul, had beheld the defeat of the Moslem army, without being able to cross with his division to their assistance, died shortly after, broken-hearted at the triumph of the infidels; and with his death, the dissolution of the kingdom was complete. The puppet-king

Ayub disappeared from the scene, and became a pensioner at the court of Lahore; Dost Mohammed Khan, the most influential of the brothers of Azem, established himself at Cabul, while two less powerful branches of the family ruled at Candahar and Peshawur; Balk, &c., fell to the Uzbeks; Cashmere and Moultan had been subdued by Runject Singh, who did not extend his conquests to the west of the Indus; the Balooch and Sind chiefs relapsed into the state of petty independence in which the invaluable work of Sir Alexander Burnes describes them; and of all the widely-extended dominions acquired by Ahmed Shah Doorauni, only the single fortress of Herat remained in the possession of any of his descendants.

Thus fell the Doorauni kingdom in Afghanistan, the re-establishment of which as an outwork to our Indian dominions is at present the predominant object of our policy in that quarter; but it appears very questionable whether that desirable object might not have been more easily and securely attained a few years since, by strengthening the interests of the present ruler of Cabul, Dost Mohammed, who was then anxious to secure our alliance, than by attempting, at the present juncture, to restore a weak monarch, whose family has no remaining partisans in the country, to a throne from which he has been twenty-nine years an exile.

The sacred clan of the Suddozyes, of which the late royal family is a branch, is insignificant in point of numbers: the power of the monarch was therefore entirely dependent on popular opinion, and on the allegiance of the chiefs of the more influential races, among whom the Barukzyes have long been pre-eminent. Hadji Jumal, one of their former chiefs, was the principal supporter of Ahmed Shah in his assumption of the regal title; and in the present day the different branches are said to be able on an emergency to bring 30,000 horse into the field; a force which, in the conflicts among the sons of Timur Shah, gave them virtually the disposal of the throne. To this powerful tribe both the existing branches of the dethroned family are odious: Kamran is more especially detested, as the murderer of their renowned chief, the Vizier Futteh Khan; and they have everything to dread from the restoration to power of

Shah Shooja, who owes to them both the loss of his throne in the first instance, and the frustration of his hopes of again regaining it on the abdication of Mahmood. The concluding remarks of Burnes on the political aspect of Afghanistan, derive additional value from having been written in 1834, at a period when little anticipation was entertained of the importance which that country would speedily assume in Oriental relations. After a summary of the present position of the different chiefs, he continues—"it is evident, therefore, that the restoration of either Shooja or Kamran is an event of the most improbable nature. The dynasty of the Suddozyes has passed away, unless it be propped up by foreign aid; and it would be impossible to reclaim the lost provinces of the empire, without a continuation of the same assistance. It is more difficult to revive than to raise a dynasty: and in the common chain of events, if the country is to be ruled by another king, we must look for another family to establish its power in Cabul, and this in all probability will be the Barukzyes." The temper of the Afghan people, moreover, has been in all ages essentially republican; and though the genius of Ahmed Shah succeeded in uniting for a time all the clans under one supreme head, the impatience with which the nobles bore the rule of his weak successors, proves that the original establishment of monarchical government was successful solely through the personal qualifications of the founder, and the favourable opportunity for asserting the national independence which was presented by the death of Nadir Shah. The patriarchal sway, too, of the Barukzye chiefs, particularly of Dost Mohammed Khan, has endeared them to the people. The character of the last-named ruler is painted in the following colours by Burnes, who had good opportunities of observing him:—"His justice affords a constant theme of praise to all classes: the peasant rejoices in the absence of tyranny, the citizen at the safety of his home, and the strict municipal regulations regarding weights and measures; the merchant at the equity of his decisions and the protection of his property, and the soldier at the regular manner in which his arrears are discharged. * * * The merchant may travel, without guard or protection, from one frontier to another—an unheard-of

circumstance in the times of the kings."—It can hardly be supposed, on consideration of all these circumstances, that a warlike and spirited people will tamely submit to receive, at the hands and for the purposes of a foreign power, a monarch whom they have already twice declared unworthy to reign, and whose only claim consists in such a degree of hereditary right as an elevation to the throne, of very recent date, may be supposed to have imparted to his family.

The situation of Dost Mohammed and his brothers, pending the late occurrences in Khorassan, was sufficiently embarrassing. If Herat had submitted, or fallen after a short resistance, as was expected, its surrender would have been immediately followed by the irruption of Persian forces into Afghanistan, in pursuance of the object openly declared by the Shah—the re-conquest of all the provinces which had been subject to the Persian monarchy under the Soofavi kings. At the same time, the blood-feud of the Barukzye family with Kamran forbade the affording him aid against the common enemy: and in the event of Kamran repulsing the attack, it was probable that he might avail himself of the reputation for prowess thus acquired to collect to his standard the Western Afghans, and perhaps the Ghiljies (a race of Afghans distinct from, and often at variance with, the Abdallis), and attempt the recovery of his father's kingdom—an intention which he is said, by Lieutenant Conolly and other travellers, to have announced on more than one occasion. In this perplexing dilemma, and frustrated in the various attempts which he had made to gain our effective alliance, Dost Mohammed followed the only course which remained open to him, in breaking off his relations with us, and concluding a treaty, by the mediation of the Russian envoy, with the Shah, then encamped before Herat: his brother, the chief of Candahar (whose territory lay nearer the scene of action, and who had been engaged in hostilities with Kamran previous to the appearance of the Persians), had anticipated him in this movement, having, as some reports state, joined the Persians with a convoy of a thousand camel-loads of provisions. As British influence is again in the ascendant at Teheran, we presume that the Shah will be required, as one of the preliminaries of reconciliation, to

sacrifice this new ally, to whom, indeed, he is no longer in a condition to afford any effectual assistance; and thus the chief of Cabul (between whom and his brothers of Candahar and Peshawar there exists much jealousy) will be left to resist single-handed the invasion of the English and Sikhs on his eastern and southern frontier, and probably an attack from Kamran on the west. There can be little doubt but that the first-named expedition (the English portion alone of which, exclusive of the Sikh contingent, amounts to nearly 30,000 men, English and sepoys), will succeed in occupying, at least temporarily, Cabul and Candahar, and replacing Shah Shooja on the throne: but his rule can have but little chance of permanence, unless secured by the continued presence of a large subsidiary force—a measure to which Runjeet Singh, whose territory would then be nearly surrounded by British cantonments, will not be likely to assent; and when once the invading troops are withdrawn, nothing but extensive support from the other Afghan chiefs, whom Shah Shooja is not likely to succeed in conciliating, can prevent Dost Mohammed, popular as he is described to be, from resuming his authority; and in this undertaking he would doubtless be supported by Russia, as it is confidently stated in the Supplement to the *Asiatic Journal* for December, that “a letter has been intercepted from the Emperor Nicholas to Dost Mohammed, offering him ample assistance of men and money on the part of the Russians to sustain him in his conflict with the English.” In this case, our occupation of Cabul will involve us in greater difficulties than the capture of Herat would have done, as it may bring the Russians, foiled in attempting to establish themselves, by force of arms, in Western Afghanistan, in immediate contact with the Punjab and our frontier.

It must also be remembered that in this proposed settlement of the country, the claims of Kamran, whose pretensions to the crown are at least equal to those of Shooja, have been altogether overlooked; his interests, in opposing the tide of Russo-Persian arms and intrigue, have hitherto been identical with our own; and he has done us good service in bearing the first brunt with a degree of gallantry and resolution of which his previous life

had given no promise. Still the restoration of Shooja will be ineffectual for any purpose of our policy, unless Herat, which has been justly characterised as the gate of the road to Hindostan, be included in the limits of his kingdom; and this re-union, it is evident, can only be effected by wresting it forcibly from Kamran—an enterprise, the success of which, from the strength and distant situation of the city, can only be ensured by a disproportionate expenditure of blood and treasure; and which, whether successful or not, must attach to the British name such an ineffaceable stain of ingratitude and violence, as will be eagerly blazoned forth and disseminated throughout Asia by the emissaries of Russia. In every point of view, our future position in Afghanistan affords grounds for doubt and anxiety; our edifice of policy, if left to itself, will, in all probability, speedily fall to pieces; and, if we are to support it by quartering subsidiary troops in the country, such an extension of our vastly overgrown territory (for to this it will, in fact, amount), will be an evil scarcely less to be deprecated than the other alternative. Had the authorities in India inclined a favourable ear a very few years, or even months back, to the overtures of the different chiefs who were then well disposed to us, the necessity for our present arbitrary and precipitate measures would not have occurred; and a tenth of the sums which we have fruitlessly lavished on a faithless and fickle monarch in Persia, would have secured us honest and able allies in the immediate vicinity of our frontier. The whole story of our recent transactions in Afghanistan, indeed, cannot be more justly and concisely summed up than in the following pithy sentences of the *United Service Journal*:—“• • • Russia and Persia each sent an envoy to this ruler of Cabul. He implored our friendship, and a little money; we refused, and threatened him. Russia and Persia promised aid and money. He, of course, accepted their offers. Here was a gross political blunder, which, as usual, must be repaired at the point of the sword. A little aid would have relieved Herat, which was making so firm a resistance. The Afghan rulers were most desirous of our friendship, and the people, to a man, are inveterately opposed to their ‘infidel’ neighbours, as they style the Persians” (the Afghans being of

the *Sooni*, or orthodox sect of Islam—the Persians *Sheahs*, or heretics). “The dispositions both of prince and people were thus in our favour, while their country lines our entire frontier, intervening between us and our foes. Twenty thousand pounds and fair words might have secured their co-operation and averted this crisis.”

Our advance into Cabul will place us in a new position with reference to the Sikh kingdom in the Punjab. It is well known that the Afghans regard their expulsion from that country, and the proscription of the Moslem faith in the territory where it was first planted in India by the swords of their ancestors, as both a national and religious disgrace; and the promise of support in attacking Runjeet Singh, was one of the principal incentives to the alliance which, unfortunately for himself, Dost Mohammed lately concluded with Persia. The interests of the old “Lion of the Punjab” coincide too nearly with our own, to admit of any serious misunderstanding during his life-time; but his death, which, from his age and the ravages made in his constitution by excessive indulgence in spirits, cannot be far distant, will be the signal for a scene of anarchy and confusion of which our close neighbourhood will not permit us to remain indifferent spectators. Like Ahmed Shah Doorauni, Runjeet Singh has established an absolute monarchy on the ruins of a republic: but the revolution has extended to the religious as well as the civil administration: he has abolished the convocations, or national diets, at the holy city of Amritsir, thirty miles from Lahore, at which the affairs of the Sikh nation were formerly discussed and settled, and destroyed every vestige of that liberty and equality on which the followers of Gooroo Govind used in former days to pride themselves. He has established a disciplined force of 25,000 infantry “fully equal,” in the opinion of Burnes, “to the troops of the Indian army,” with a due proportion of regular cavalry, and a formidable train of 150 pieces of artillery: but this system is unpopular in the country, and the Frenchmen, by whom the regular troops are officered, are viewed with a jealous eye by the Sikh Sirdars, whom they have supplanted in posts of military authority. The whole of the improvements in the administration, both military and civil, are,

in fine, hitherto regarded by the great body of the Sikhs as a best but hazardous innovations: and it would require the hand and head of a vigorous and talented successor to carry out to the full extent the system which Runjeet Singh has introduced. But his only legitimate son, Kurruck Singh, so far from possessing the qualifications which would enable him to grasp the sceptre of his father, is "almost imbecile, illiterate, and inanimate," "takes no share in politics, and conciliates no party." There is, however, an adopted son, Shere Singh, now governor of Cashmere, whose frank and martial character and unbounded generosity, have given him great popularity among the soldiery, of which he will doubtless endeavour to avail himself on the death of the Raja, in order to set aside the legitimate son, and seize the kingdom for himself. But this will scarcely be effected without a civil war; and in the confusion thus produced, it may naturally be expected that the numerous partisans of the *ancien régime* will make an effort to oust both the aspirants to monarchy, and restore the old constitution in Church and State. What the result of the struggle may be, cannot of course be foreseen; but it is the opinion of Burnes, the latest and most accurate traveller who has visited these regions, that, "If Shere Singh does not secure a supremacy, this kingdom will probably relapse into its former state of anarchy and small republics," or "be subjected by some neighbouring power." The accession of the Punjab to our own territories, in which all past experience demonstrates that such a state of things must inevitably terminate, would be an acquisition in every point of view most invaluable to the security of British power. Its numerous rivers, and the unrivalled fecundity of the soil fertilised by their waters, have caused the Punjab to be frequently denominated the Netherlands of India; and the pertinacity with which the successive lines of defence afforded by these rivers, were defended by the natives, in early ages against Alexander, and in later times against the incursions of the early Moslem conquerors, has given the country an additional feature of resemblance to that battle-field of Europe. The extension of the British frontier to the Indus, would give our territory a well-defined and defensible boundary, with a series of positions in its rear, which, even if the Indus were crossed by an

Invading army, would require to be forced in detail; at present there is not a single fortress, not a river or a mountain, between Delhi and our frontier-station of Loodiana, which could check an invader's progress after crossing the Sutlej. Besides the natural advantages to be derived from the possession of the country, the Sikhs, naturally martial, and unencumbered by the privileges of caste, &c., which fetter the Hindoo population, would furnish an inexhaustible supply of hardy soldiers to fill the ranks of our native armies; the abundant and regular pay, and the care with which the comforts of the soldiery are provided for, would render our service more popular than that of the disciplined troops of the present Raja, where the pay is often in arrear, and the discipline does not extend beyond the parade-ground. Runjeet himself, indeed, once shrewdly remarked to an English visitant at Lahore, that a regular army did not suit the habits of an Eastern prince, as it could not be regularly paid; and some of the Sikh officers, at the interview between the Raja and Lord William Bentinck, expressed great astonishment at being told, in answer to an inquiry whether the English troops often clamoured for their pay, that such conduct would be considered mutinous, and visited with severe punishment.

But whatever may be the future destinies of the Punjab, it is fortunate that the shock of the impending war must fall on its soil, in case of a temporary reverse, rather than on any of the districts under the sway of the British. In removing the seat of the conflict to a distance from our territories, the authorities have, beyond all controversy, acted wisely. It is a favourite notion in England, that our equitable institutions and impartial administration of justice, with the security of life and property thereby afforded, as contrasted with the alternate anarchy and despotic tyranny previously prevailing, have made our rule so popular with the bulk of our Indian subjects, as to ensure their adherence in the event of a foreign invasion; but this is well known to be a mere delusion by those who are practically acquainted with the country. It may be true that the native merchants of Calcutta, and the cultivators of Hindostan Proper, feel some degree of gratitude and attachment to a government

under which they are exempt from the various forms of oppression and extortion still exercised in Oude and other semi-independent states; but even among these classes considerable distrust and discontent has lately been excited by the vexatious inquiries instituted as to the tenure of their lands; and at any time, or under any ruler, anything like European feelings of patriotism and loyalty are utterly out of the question. But in the northern and north-western provinces, on which the storm of invasion would first burst, the case is widely different.

The warlike and turbulent tribes of Rajpootana, forming the military caste of the Hindoo nation, foiled all the efforts of the emperors of Delhi to complete their subjugation. Even now their principal sovereignties acknowledge only a slight and reluctant dependence on the British power, and would rise against it on the first appearance of a foreign standard on the Indus. During the siege of Herat they openly expressed their satisfaction at the prospect of a change of masters: and it is even strongly suspected that secret agents from several Rajpoot states communicated with the Russian envoy in the camp of Mohammed Shah. The Patans, or descendants of the Moslem conquerors, of whom thousands are scattered over the country, having no profession but arms, and prevented by pride and prejudices from entering our military service, loathe us both as strangers and infidels, whose presence and dominion, in the land where they so long reigned supreme, is a perpetual stigma both on their religion and their prowess. The Mah-rattas would eagerly seize the opportunity to avenge their humiliation; and the numerous predatory tribes of central India would soon swell the array of a native insurrection against that power whose rigid surveillance and omnipresent arms have supplanted

———"the good old rule, the simple plan,
That those should take who have the power,
And those should keep who can."

In short, the first footing gained by a Russian or foreign army in India would be the signal for the instant realisation of the

State of things predicted thirteen years ago, in the event of Lord Combermere's failing before Bhurtpore, by a great and good man, whose published fragments, notwithstanding a few inaccuracies, afford almost the only clear and practical view extant of our Indian possessions, the late Bishop Reginald Heber:—"Should he fail, it is unhappily but too true that all northern and western India, every man who owns a sword, and can buy or steal a horse, from the Sutlej to the Nerbudda, will be up against us, less from disliking us than in the hope of booty." At the moment when this was written, the mob were shouting in the streets of Delhi, and before the Residency, "the rule of Company is over!" and plunderings on a small scale had already commenced, in anticipation of a second victory to be gained by the defenders of the Jat capital, already triumphant over Lord Lake. The annals of the Pindarry war show how easily a marauding force, held together solely by the hope of spoil, is collected in India. The famous freebooting leader, Amcer Khan (lately dead), on being asked how he contrived to keep together the various tribes and religions found in the ranks of his motley followers, said that he always found the talismanic gathering-word *Loot* (plunder) a sufficient bond of union in any part of India; and in those devastating hordes of cavalry, the Cossacks and Bashkirs would find a similarity not only in habits and pursuits, but even in name, the term *Cosak* being in common use throughout the north of India to indicate a predatory horseman. An outbreak of all the independent tribes, and of the turbulent spirits within the British territories, would be the immediate consequence of the appearance of an invader; and even if not a single foreign soldier survived to recross the Sutlej, a second Pindarry war, with years of bloodshed and suffering, would be requisite for the coercion of the revolters and the restoration of tranquillity. But the transference of the seat of war to the right bank of the Indus, and the interposition of the Punjab between it and our own possessions, will avert the possibility, as far as the present aspect of affairs enables us to judge, of this train of calamities.

On the success of the Cabul expedition will probably depend the maintenance of peace on the other frontier; for, whether

from secret leagues and a concerted plan of operations, or from an accidental concurrence, it is certain that we are threatened on all sides. *The Ghoorkhas of Nepaul, who gave us so much trouble in the last war, are said to be already in motion along the north-eastern frontier; and the language held by the new usurper in Birman is said to be so equivocal as to have rendered the concentration of a strong force in Arracan, ill as the troops can at present be spared, a matter of imperative necessity.* Thus, in every direction, the war-clouds are gathering, and it is only by assuming a firm and determined attitude that we can hope to repel or divert them; a temporising or purely defensive line of policy is now too late, and would be considered only as an indication of weakness and irresolution. The want of a comprehensive and commanding genius at the helm of Indian affairs will, however, be severely felt; and the warmest admirers of the present Governor-General can scarcely claim for him the possession of qualities calculated to cope with so momentous a crisis. It is currently reported that at the present juncture, when everything depends upon prompt action, he has applied to the Home Government for instructions! Would Hastings or Cornwallis have acted thus?

II.—KHIVA, CENTRAL ASIA, AND CABUL.

(Published in April, 1840.)

THE conflicting relations between Great Britain and Russia, in which the double position held by each of those powers in reference to Europe and Asia has for some time placed them, appear to have been brought, by the results of our advance into Cabul, to the verge of an inevitable collision. The gradual absorption of all the Indian sovereignties into the empire of the Company, and the predominance of Russia over the whole of Northern Asia, from Kamschatka to the Caucasus, must sooner or later have occasioned this; and the turn which the adroitness of Russian diplomacy, since the accession of the reigning sove-

Reign, Mohammed Shah, has given to Persian politics, has contributed to hasten the crisis, by converting that country, from a stubborn barrier to Russian encroachment, into a highway to be securely traversed by her troops, in prosecution of her ulterior schemes of conquest. *How far this untoward state of affairs might have been prevented or averted by timely management on the part of our administration in the East, it is not our present purpose to inquire ; and it is a point on which neither pamphlets nor parliamentary debates seem to have succeeded in throwing much light ; but the consequences speedily became apparent in the famous siege of Herat—an event which will probably be hereafter regarded as the opening of a new page in the history of Central Asia.* Notwithstanding the failure of the enterprise, the rulers of British India were at last effectually startled and alarmed by the danger to which one of the keys of their empire had been exposed ; and the expedition for the restoration of Shah Shooja was planned and undertaken in haste, in order to strengthen their defences in the north-west, and pre-occupy the exterior points from which their frontier might have been assailed. Russia appears at first to have regarded this advance on our part as a false step, both in a military and political view, which must so speedily and inevitably work out its own discomfiture, as to relieve her from the necessity of accelerating the catastrophe. The distance and impracticable nature of the country to be attacked, separated from our own territories by deserts and hostile independent tribes ; the injudicious reductions recently made in our Indian army, opposed to the presumed energy and popularity of the Barukzye rulers, and the valour of the Afghans, whom the siege of Herat had shown not to have degenerated in this respect from their fathers, —all concurred to set Russia at ease as to the British operations west of the Indus ; and, with the exception of the (afterwards disavowed) mission of the unfortunate Vikovich to Cabul, she appears to have waited in tranquil expectation for the time when the destruction of the Sepoy columns, in the mountain passes of the Afghan country, should have left the Anglo-Indian government destitute of disposable troops, and distracted by the innumerable revolts and conspiracies which would have exploded

in all parts of India at the first tidings of reverse in Cabul.* Even if these anticipations should not be verified in their full extent, the dearly-bought experience of Circassian mountain warfare justified the assumption, that the conquest of Afghanistan must occupy more than a single campaign. But all these seemingly well-reasoned calculations were overthrown by the events of the war. The Afghans recoiled from the encounter of the proverbial *ikbal*, or luck of the Company, and the bayonets of disciplined troops, in a panic from which the gallant storm of Ghazni gave them no time to recover; and the blow thus struck produced an impression through all the tribes of Central Asia of the promptitude and invincibility of English warfare, which made it imperative on Russia to vindicate her own military reputation, and counterbalance the *prestige* of the English successes, by a corresponding display of power and energy. The announcement, therefore, that an armament had been despatched against Khiva, could excite no surprise in the minds of those who had regarded with attention the changes of the political horizon—the only doubt was, where the bolt would be aimed. We have thus briefly traced the successive movements by which the two great aggressive powers of Asia, issuing from the boundaries within which they had hitherto restrained themselves, have at length descended into the arena which the annihilation of the political independence of Persia, and the division and limited extent of the Turkman and Uzbek states, have left clear for the coming contest. The mountains of Afghanistan, at the upper extremity of the valley of the Oxus, have already been occupied by British forces—the lower part of the course of that river has probably, even while we write, become a component part of the Muscovite empire—the plains of Mawara'nahr, unbroken, from the foot of the Hindoo Kooshi to the Sea of Aral, by a mountain or intersecting river, alone

* There must be many still living who remember the sensation produced by the threatened invasion of India in 1797 by Shah Zemaun, the elder brother of a monarch whom a British army has just restored to a nominal sovereignty; when, in the words of Elphinstone, "the Rohillas and Patans began to assemble from all quarters in arms, and every Mussulman, even in the remotest regions of the Dekkan, waited in anxious expectation for the advance of the champion of Islam!"

separate the advanced posts. The existing circumstances of the sovereignties comprehended in this region (in past ages the battle-field of the Moguls and Moslems), as well as their political relations with each other, and with the more powerful states in their vicinity, are as little generally known in Europe as Afghanistan was before the events of the last few years brought it into notice, but more accurate information exists in the jealously-guarded archives of Petersburg; and while our politicians at home, and our military leaders in India, are exulting in having secured our Oriental empire from any future approaches on the side of Herat and Western Afghanistan, Russia has lost no time in repairing this check by a move in flank, the success of which will (as we shall endeavour in the course of the present article to show) give her the command of a position at once beyond the reach of any offensive operations on our part, and presenting equal advantages with Herat as a basis for attacking both our commerce and rule in India. Since the siege of Herat, indeed, and the undisguised avowals of its ulterior objects which the European journals in the pay of the Czar were permitted to make, Russia seems to have felt that any effectual concealment of her designs in that quarter is no longer practicable; the mask, once raised, has been thrown aside as useless, and arms have taken the place of intrigue and diplomacy.

Late in last year it became known that an expedition had marched, under the command of General Peroffski, against Khiva; and the strength of this corps, which is said to amount to 24,000 men of all arms, with seventy-two pieces of cannon, (besides a powerful reserve, and the volunteered aid of 10,000 Kirghizes,) obviously denotes, when directed against a principality the population of which does not exceed 300,000, a design, not of reprisals or chastisement for past injuries, but of conquest and permanent occupation. [A well-informed French journal, *Le Commerce*, states the divisions of the Russian force as follows:—9000 infantry of the line, ten regiments of the regular Cossacks of Siberia, five regiments of Ural Cossacks, eight regiments of Tartars, Kalmucks, &c.—in all, 11,500 cavalry; two *demi-brigades* of artillery of mounted Cossacks, and a siege-battery—the disproportionate force of the cavalry is explained by the

opposition expected from the Turkmenians in crossing the steppe. The reserve is stated by the same journal, on the authority of letters from Odessa, at 12,000 infantry, 8000 Don Cossacks, and twenty-four guns, detached from the army of the Caucasus,* under the orders of the Vice-Ataman Orloff.] The fate of Khiva may therefore be considered as sealed, unless the desert and the Turkmen hordes prove more efficient auxiliaries than is probable; but since its incorporation with the Russian dominions will bring that empire into close contact (if not with the immediate outposts of our own frontier) with countries in which the recent events render it essential that British interests should predominate, it may be useful, before entering into the consideration of the concomitant questions of policy, to give some account of the past history and present state of Khiva itself, the very position of which on the map is scarcely known, we suspect, to the majority of the English *reading public*.

The Khanate of Khiva or Orgunj, against which the formidable force above detailed is directed, is of limited extent, consisting principally of an oasis, about 200 miles in length from north to south, and half as much from east to west, extending along both banks of the Amoo or Oxus, before its course is lost among the vast thickets of reeds and rushes which precede its entrance into the Sea of Aral. Enveloped on all sides by deserts, it presents the appearance of a fertile island among the waste: the deserts of Kara-koom, or "the black sand," (sometimes termed the steppe of Kharasm,) extending from its western border to the Caspian Sea; while the Kizil-koom, or "red sand," covers its eastern frontier, forming also the northern boundary of the Bokhara territory, and reaching in that direction as far as the confines of Kokan or Ferghana. In the middle ages of Mohammedan history, it was of far greater power and consideration than at present—the governors of Kharasm (as Khiva was then called) having, in the early part of the twelfth century, thrown off their dependence on the Turkish Sultans of Persia, founded a dynasty before which the power both of the

* From other accounts it would appear that this reserve is a sort of condemned corps, destined to garrison Khiva after its capture, and selected from the army of the Caucasus to punish its disaffection.

Seljookians and Ghorians was subverted, and which extended its supremacy from Kashgar to Kerman, and from the Indus to Rei and Ispahan. But the contest which the fifth Sultan of this race, Mohammed Kootb-ed-deen, undertook against the hitherto unknown might of the Moguls, proved fatal to his power and family; and the ruin of the Kharasmian monarchy opened the door to the irruption into Southern Asia of Jenghiz Khan and his descendants, whose career of bloodshed and desolation was arrested only on the confines of Egypt by the prowess of the Mamelukes. But their fury raged most unsparingly in the provinces on which their thirst for blood and plunder was first glutted: Transoxiana was left desolate both of cities and inhabitants, and Khiva does not again emerge into notice till the commencement of the 16th century, when it fell, with the adjoining countries, into the power of the Uzbeks, who expelled the princes of the house of Timur from all their remaining possessions; and from that time to the present, the people of Orgunj (the name more commonly used in the East) are constantly mentioned in the annals of Persia as a rapacious and predatory race, sending out frequent *chappows* or plundering parties into the neighbouring territories, particularly those subject to the Persians, with whom religious differences (all the Uzbeks being Soonis) placed them in a state of perpetual hostility; while the insulated situation of their own country, environed on all sides by extensive and almost impassable deserts, secured them against the advance of a Persian army. In 1739-40, however, the reduction of the Uzbek states was resolved on by Nadir Shah, then flushed with the conquest of India, and elated by the unexampled height of power to which he had raised the Persian monarchy. Bokhara yielded without resistance on the advance of the conqueror, and its ruler, Abul-Fayez Khan, a descendant of Jenghiz, was restored by Nadir to a vassal throne; but Ilburz, the Khan of Khiva, trusting to his deserts and fortresses for defence, refused to do homage, and even put to death the envoys sent from Bokhara to persuade him to submission. But the desert was quickly traversed by the Persian army, with its field artillery and battering train; the Khan, rashly issuing from the impregnable fortress of Hazarasp to give battle in the plain, was

taken prisoner and put to death, with twenty of his principal officers, in vengeance for his late violation of the law of nations; and Khiva surrendered after a few days' siege.

Twenty thousand Persian slaves, according to Hanway, were delivered from bondage on the capture of this stronghold of the Uzbek freebooters; and a great number of Russian captives are further said by Meerza Mahdi, the biographer of Nadir, to have been released by the generosity of the victor: the more laudable in this case, as exercised towards those of a different faith. Two Englishmen,* who had penetrated into these remote regions, in the fruitless hope of establishing a commercial intercourse with the Uzbek and Turkman states over the Caspian, from Russia, were also found in the vanquished city, and dismissed with honour and safety. 6450

But no permanent conquest resulted from this inroad. The Khivans threw off the yoke in a few months after the Persians retired; resuming, at the same time, their former habits of rapine, which the distracted state of Persia, after the death of Nadir, enabled them to prosecute with even more than their previous impunity. The sovereign of Bokhara, however, availed himself of the anarchy in which the death of Ilburz had left them, to assert a supremacy over Khiva, which continued to acknowledge a nominal subjection to Bokhara till the commencement of the present century, when its independence was re-established by Mohammed Raheem Khan, the father of the present ruler, Allah-Kooli; and at present the sway of the Khan of Khiva extends over the Turkman tribes, who wander over the desert between his country, the Persian frontier, and the Caspian; the fortresses of Merv and Shurukhs, in Khorassan, were also, when Burnes travelled, subject to him; and, under the father of the present Khan, the Khivan forces once ventured completely across the desert into Persia, in order to oppose the advance of a Persian army which threatened these detached points of his dominions.

The first recorded intercourse between Khiva and Russia was in the reign of Peter the Great, who, in 1716-17, despatched

* The names of these adventurous merchants were Thompson and Hogg. Their journal is published by Hanway (vol. i. p. 345, 4to edition).

thither Prince Alexander Bekevich, a Georgian by birth, ostensibly on a mission to the Khan, and to ascertain the practicability of re-opening an ancient channel, by which tradition states the waters of the Oxus to have been discharged in primitive times into the Caspian Sea, at the Gulf of Balkan, but from which they had, at a remote period, been diverted, either by artificial mounds or a convulsion of nature, to their present course into the Lake of Aral. It was believed, however, that Bekevich's real instructions were to take possession of the mines of gold and lapis-lazuli said to exist in the mountain-range between Khiva and Samarkand; and, for the accomplishment of this insidious project—which implied the occupation of all the intermediate country—he was accompanied by an *escort* of 2000 regular troops, with several pieces of artillery. The Khivans at first dissembled their suspicions, or were, perhaps, too weak to resist; but, on the Russian force being imprudently dispersed into winter-quarters, the different detachments were simultaneously surprised and cut off.* Bekevich was carried into the presence of the Khan, and, after being reproached by him for his meditated perfidy, put to death by being cut limb from limb! His fate, however, appears to have passed unavenged; and, for more than a century after it, no direct communication with Khiva was attempted, though caravans frequently passed through its territory from Bokhara, &c., to trade with the Russians at the Bay of Mungushluk, in the north-east angle of the Caspian; and merchants from Khiva, according to Tooke, occasionally attended the great fair of Astrakhan with precious stones and ingots of gold and silver, the produce of their Indian commerce.

In 1819-20, however (nearly at the same time with the fruitless embassy of M. de Négri to Bokhara), General Yermoloff, then governor of Georgia, sent his aide-de-camp, Captain Mouraviev, on a mission to the Khan of Khiva, Mohammed Raheem, who had then lately shaken off his dependence on Bokhara; and from the narrative of this expedition, published at Paris in 1823, nearly all our recent knowledge of Khiva is derived. But the envoy totally failed in the declared objects of his

* The guns taken from Bekevich are said, by Hanway, to have been used in the defence of Khiva against Nadir.

legation, which were the ratification of commercial and friendly relations between Russia and Khiva, the transference of the point of destination for the Bokhara caravans from Mungushluk to the nearer and more commodious haven of Krasno-Voda* in the Bay of Balkan, and the abolition of the trade in Russian slaves, of whom, Mouraviev says, there were more than 3000 in Khiva.† All these propositions were, however, rejected or evaded: Mouraviev was even detained some time in a fortress, on the not unreasonable suspicion of being the precursor of an army, or at best a spy; but two years later, when the return of Négri and his suite had proved the practicability of the direct route from Orenburg, a caravan was despatched under an escort to penetrate to Bokhara over the steppe east of the Sea of Aral, thus avoiding the Khivan territories altogether. The success of this scheme would have deprived Mohammed Raheem of the valuable duties which he derived from the transit of goods through his dominions; and the caravan was accordingly attacked by 7000 horse, near the mouth of the Sirr or Jaxartes, and driven back to Russia, after a great part of the merchandise had been carried off or destroyed by the assailants. Yet even this daring outrage passed unnoticed by the Russian government, on the allegation of there being no proof that it had been instigated by the Khan; and the caravans returned, without further molestation, to the old route by Khiva to Mungushluk.

From this sketch of the past history of the country now apparently destined to be absorbed into the Muscovite empire, it is obvious that, political motives apart, Russia has ample grounds of complaint to justify her in suppressing a nest of ruthless brigands, who have not only perpetrated acts of open hostility against her trade and subjects, but have long systematically carried on, under shelter of the deserts which surround and protect them, a merciless and *man-stealing* warfare against all surrounding nations not of Uzbek race, similar to that

* Krasno-voda, (the *Crimson Water*), nearly opposite the mouth of the Araxes, is only seventeen days' journey from Khiva; Mungushluk thirty.

† From the information acquired by Burnes, he considers that there are not fewer than 30 000 Persian slaves in Khiva, and about 2000 Russian; the latter, however, are no longer sold in Bokhara, in consequence of a convention with Russia to that effect.

practised against the Christian powers of Europe by the Barbary pirates. If the imprisonment of the Russian envoy, and the attack on the Orenburg caravan had been promptly answered and avenged by the march of an army, the retaliation would have been well-timed and justifiable; but the ambitious views of Russia in Central Asia were not then sufficiently matured or distinct to render the possession of Khiva necessary for their immediate furtherance. Persia, also, was then erect and independent, under the government of the crafty and sagacious Futteh Ali, who would have viewed with distrust the approximation of Russian arms and machinations to his turbulent and scarcely subdued province of Khorassan. The time, in short, was not yet come for developing the schemes, of which the countries east of the Caspian were the destined theatre; and the insults offered to the majesty of Russia were thus suffered to pass with impunity. But the events of 1838 and 1839 have given a widely different aspect to Asiatic politics. The victorious entrance of an English army into Candahar and Cabul has rendered it essential for Russia, in accordance with her invariable policy, to counteract by an instant demonstration the moral influence thus accruing to England, and to acquire, by a step in advance of her present Siberian frontier, a counterpoise to the extension of the Anglo-Indian dominion towards the north. Hence the conquest of Khiva (originally planned two years back, as the organs of Russia admit, but postponed in consequence of the repulse of the Persians before Herat), becomes an object of paramount importance to the cabinet of Petersburg; and the marauding habits of the people, combined with their bygone infractions of diplomatic courtesies, furnish the same ready pretext for invasion which was at hand to France, when, by the capture of Algiers on similar grounds, she laid the foundation of a dominion which bids fair to extend, at no distant period, over the whole of Northern Africa. That the advantageous results to be expected from the conversion of Khiva into an appendage to Asiatic Russia were long ago perceived and pointed out, the following extract, given in the *Quarterly Review* from the work of Mouraviev, will, we think, sufficiently prove; and though his prognostications were dismissed with little cere-

mony by the writer in the *Quarterly*, which then held as an article of its creed that all danger from Russia to our Indian empire was chimerical and visionary, we suspect that few will be found in the present day to question their general correctness or practicability.

"Even now, caravans from the countries of the South arrive at Khiva; and if commerce does not acquire a greater degree of extension, it is because it is shackled by the frequent depredations of the nomade tribes. If we possessed Khiva, the conquest of which would not be difficult, the nomades of Central Asia would dread our power, and a route for commerce would be established by the Sind (Indus) and Amoo-deria (Oxus) to Russia: all the riches of Asia would then flow into our country, and we should see the brilliant projects of Peter the Great realised. Once masters of Khiva, many other states would become dependent upon us. In a word, Khiva is at this moment an advanced post, opposed to the commerce of Russia with Bokhara and Northern India; but if subject to us, the Khivan territory would become a stronghold, which would defend this commerce against the attacks of the tribes dispersed over Southern Asia. This oasis, situated in the midst of an ocean of sand, would become the point of re-union of all the commerce of Asia, and would shake, even to the centre of India, *the enormous commercial preponderance of the dominators of the sea*. The route from Khiva to Astrakhan might be greatly shortened, since it is but seventeen days' march from Orgunj to the Bay of Krasnovodsk, whence, with a favourable wind, Astrakhan may be reached in a few days."—*MOURAVIUS*, pp. 344-5. (*Quart. Rev.* vol. xxxvi. p. 127.)

It could hardly be expected that Russia would tamely submit to see these brilliant prospects closed against her by the advance of the "dominators of the sea" beyond the Indus,—an event of which no anticipation existed when the above lines were written; but the *commercial* value of Khiva cannot be duly estimated without a previous explanation of the change in political relations which will be induced by its conquest; and this point we shall first proceed to consider. Hitherto, contented with a line of southern frontier in Asia, which intersects that continent through its entire length, and places under her eye every change in the political horizon from the Bosphorus to Peking, Russia has abstained from any direct interference with the various states which overspread the vast area extending east from the Caspian to the limits of the Chinese empire, and from the Siberian outposts to the Himalaya and the Hindoo-Koosh. With all these regions the intercourse of Russia, up to the present time, has been confined to an occasional embassy; but the possession of Khiva will at once give her the undisputed sovereignty of the

Sea of Aral, which, though shallow and encumbered with sand-banks, is navigable by flat-bottomed vessels or steam-boats of small draught of water; and the equipment of flotillas on the streams of the two mighty tributaries to this inland sea, the Amoo or Oxus, and the Sirr or Jaxartes,* will speedily bring within the reach of Russian machination the various intervening territories, up to the Chinese dependencies in Kashgar and Yarkend. The vast tract lying between these two rivers was known in the early ages of Mohammedan conquest by the name of Mawara'nahr, or "beyond the river;" and is eulogised by the Arabian geographers as "the garden of Asia, and one of the three earthly paradises;" and Ebn-Haukal declares that if all the rest of the earth were afflicted by famine, the deficiency might be supplied from the superabundance of the last year's crop in Mawara'nahr. But these flowery descriptions are far from being corroborated by the few recent accounts which we have received, which represent it as being in great part sterile and desert, probably for want of the artificial irrigation which enriched its soil in its ancient days of superabundance and fertility.

The territory of Khiva, as noticed above, occupies its north-west division; and from the frontiers of Khiva, the kingdom of Bokhara and its dependencies extend along the course of the Oxus to the borders of the petty state of Koondooz, bounding Afghanistan on the north. The north-east part of Mawara'nahr, along the course of the Sirr, and immediately contiguous to Chinese Tartary, consists of the small Uzbek kingdom of Kokan or Ferghana (the former patrimony of the house of Timur), with which, since the mission of Nazarov† in 1812, an occasional intercourse has been kept up by Russia. With the districts

* "The navigation of the Oxus ceases only at a short distance from Cabul; and once masters of this river and the towns on its banks, the Russians may proceed against the capital of Shah Shooja unopposed by England, with much more facility than an army from Herat."—*Le National*. The Jaxartes is navigable about 600 miles, nearly up to the city of Kokan.

† The journal of this embassy was published at the private expense of Count Romanoff; but the charts were suppressed by order of Government. All that is known of the geography of this and the adjacent regions is given in the introduction to the *Memoirs of Baber*, translated by Erskine and Leyden.

lying along the valley of the Sirr, and their cities of Khojend, Otrar, and Tashkend, Europe is at the present day absolutely unacquainted; and we are not aware that any European (with the exception, perhaps, of a stray Russian trader) is even known to have visited them since Clavijo appeared at the court of Timur in 1402, as ambassador from Henry III. of Castile.

The state of the kingdom of Bokhara, the most extensive and important division of the Uzbek nation, over which its sovereign asserts a nominal supremacy, has been made better known in Europe by the travels of Moorcroft, Conolly, and Burnes, especially the last-named author, whose invaluable work forms a text-book on the commerce, power, and resources of the regions bordering on the Oxus. It is no longer ruled by the descendants of Jenghiz, who were dethroned, not many years after the transient conquest by Nadir, by their vizier Shah Mourad Beg, who made himself famous throughout Asia as a Moslem saint, by the title of Beggi-Jan, and transmitted an hereditary character for sanctity to his descendants, the present reigning family. It has maintained a friendly correspondence from time to time with Russia ever since the days of Peter the Great, who left no means untried for the realisation of his darling visions of overland commerce from India; and when these were resumed in the reign of Catharine II., an attempt was made to conciliate the good-will of Beggi-Jan by the gift of 40,000 silver rubles, which that saintly personage expended in the erection of a college of theology. The object, however, was gained; and from that time the traffic with Russia, by caravans through Khiva to the Caspian, as noticed above, has continued with little interruption; and since the legation of Négri, twenty years ago, more than one embassy from Bokhara has appeared at Petersburg. Though the observations of Burnes led him to suppose that amicable relations might easily be established with the government of this state, the overtures recently made for that purpose have not only been rejected, but our envoy, Colonel Stoddart, has been even forcibly detained at Bokhara, where Dost Mohammed, the dethroned ruler of Cabul, has found an asylum, after maintaining himself for some time in the small border state of Koondooz, the chief of which had declared himself hostile to the British.

But these steps have probably been dictated less by animosity against Britain than by solicitude to avoid the resentment of the Russians, whose occupation of Khiva will place them in alarming proximity—the position of Bokhara, lying in the direct track by which two mighty and constantly encroaching powers are advancing from opposite quarters to the encounter, leaves her no chance of escaping destruction in the shock (destitute as she is both of military strength and natural fastnesses), unless by siding at once with the more formidable. It is currently rumoured, indeed, in India, that Bokhara is to be summarily taken under Russian *protection*, as soon as the conquest of Khiva shall have been achieved; and the *Bombay Gazette* of December last goes even further, confidently asserting that “the designs of the Emperor of Russia extend not only to the establishment of a force at Khiva and Bokhara, *but even at Herat*. He meditates not only an incursion into the territory of a prince with whom he is at war, such as is the Khan of Khiva, but intends putting himself in an attitude of hostility to Great Britain, as the arbitress of Central Asia.”

Whatever may be the proportion of truth and error in the statements just quoted, there can be little doubt that the plans of Russia for her future operations are now fully matured, and that the blow struck against Khiva will be vigorously followed up. The schemes originally sketched out in 1791 by the Prince of Nassau and M. de St. Génie, for “gaining over the Afghans to the interest of Russia, and sending an army through Bokhara to the north of India,* are at length, after the lapse of half a century, considered ripe for execution. It is known that troops and artillery, to a considerable amount, have been silently assembled at Asterabad, and the consent of the Shah obtained for their passage through Persia, ostensibly to co-operate, if necessary, by a flank movement on Khiva with General Peroffski’s army; but it is surmised that their real instructions are to await the issue of the intrigues now in progress at Herat, where every effort has been made to induce Kamran to abandon the English alliance, and throw himself into the arms of Russia. The

* See the “Miscellaneous Papers” appended to the work of Eaton on the Turkish Government, 1798.

*language held to our envoy by the able vizier, Yar-Mohammed Khan (who rules in the name of his debauched and drunken master), shows the extent of the offers thus made. He openly avowed that the subsidy of three lacs of rupees (30,000*l.*) was indifferent to him, as Russia had promised four times as much ; and this demeanour, coupled with the rumoured refusal to admit our troops and artillery, shows that our interests are on but a precarious footing in the city for the security of which we first involved ourselves in an Afghan war. The threat of a renewed attack from the Persians (who have all along retained the fortress of Ghorian, near Herat, which was taken in the former invasion), is probably another *ruse* to sway the determination of Kamran, as it is obvious that a hint from Russia to Mohammed Shah would at once avert the impending danger ; while, on the other hand, the stipulation that he should recognise his uncle and rival, Shah Shooja, as king of Cabul (which was exacted as the price of British aid), is said to have given him deep offence ; —and if, by working on his ambition or fear, or by tempting his avarice, he is won over to the side of Russia, the key of British India will be lost to us after all ; unless, reversing the characters in which the two powers previously appeared, we resort to the *ultima ratio* of force, and become the assailants of the fortress which our ostensible object was to defend—a measure which (even if our troops had not already sufficient employment) could scarcely be justified by even the utmost latitude of Anglo-Indian notions on international law. If, therefore, the Russians succeed in excluding us from Herat, they will be enabled to move forward to the Indus from a double point of departure—Herat and Bokhara ; and the only advantage (though not a trifling one) which we shall have gained by our expenditure of blood and treasure, will be the removal of the theatre of war from the territories directly subject to us.*

But before we abandon this part of the subject, it is necessary to advert again to the arguments by which M. Mouraviev, in the passage above cited, has endeavoured to show that the *commercial* advantages alone, to be derived from the seizure of Khiva, would be sufficient to warrant Russia in undertaking the enterprise ; and it only requires a short investigation to

demonstrate, that if Britain has reason to dread the *political* predominance in Transoxiana and Turkestan, which must accrue to Russia from this acquisition, a not less important consideration arises in the extent to which it must operate as a bar to the introduction into these countries of British manufactures, which even at present, by the circuitous route of Trebizond and Persia, and overland from India, find their way into Central Asia in such quantities as almost to have excluded Russian goods from the markets; and which now, by steam navigation on the long course of the Indus, may be supplied with such facility as to render competition impossible for the inferior productions of Russia, burdened besides, as at present they must always be, with the expense and losses attendant on a long land journey by caravans. Our trade with these parts is so far from being of recent origin, that its establishment through Russia was the object of our first diplomatic intercourse with that country. As early as the reign of Elizabeth, English goods were introduced into Persia and Turkestan by the route of Archangel (the only port* then possessed by Russia) and the Caspian. In 1567, Anthony Jenkinson even reached Bokhara; and four years later, was the bearer of an autograph letter from Elizabeth to the reigning Shah of Persia, with the view of effecting a permanent commercial treaty. But the transit through Russia was interrupted by the troubles of which that country became the scene, after the extinction of the House of Rurik: and though, after the accession of the family of Romanoff, the Archangel trade was carried on with fresh vigour, few† English merchants appear to have penetrated into Central Asia during the 17th century. The establishment of an Oriental commerce was among the first objects of the new system of Russian policy introduced by Peter I.; and the insidious mission of Bekevich to Khiva (the tragical result of which has been before mentioned), was part of the concerted scheme by which it was sought to gain a footing on the eastern shores of the

* Russia did not acquire a port on the Baltic till 1721; and it was not till 1739 that she established herself on the Sea of Azoph.

† The *Asiatic Journal* notices the discovery at Cabul of the tomb of an Englishman named Hicks, who died there in 1666.

Caspian ; but little was effected till the reign of Elizabeth, when British capital and energy were called in to effect what Russian craft had failed to accomplish. An English company (of which the well-known Jonas Hanway was the resident representative in Persia) was formed, and endowed with peculiar privileges by the Empress ; factories, supplied from a dépôt at Astrakhan, were established at different points on the shores of the Caspian ; and the minor states of Central Asia were visited by commercial agents, two of whom (as stated above) were found in Khiva when the Persians captured it. But these fair prospects were frustrated, partly by the defection of two of the directors of the Caspian navigation—Elton and Woodrowe, who abandoned the service of the Company for that of Persia, and partly by the jealousy of the Russians at the favour shown to foreigners ; and the anarchy in which Persia and Transoxiana were involved for many years after the death of Nadir Shah, prevented the resumption of the project. The Company, however, continued in existence till the reign of Catharine II., when the formation, in 1780, of the famous Armed Neutrality, first placed Russian politics in overt opposition to the interests of England, and made the depression of British commerce and influence in Asia an object of primary importance, which has ever since been pursued with the undeviating pertinacity which characterises every branch of the Russian administration, neither liable to change with every succeeding ministry, nor made, like our foreign policy, the topic of public debates, where the arguments and revelations dictated by party are proclaimed to friend and foe through the medium of the press.

The state of the Caspian trade at the close of the last century is given in detail, from Soimonoff and other Russian writers, by Tooke (*View of the Russian Empire*, book xii., sect. ii.) The exports of Russia in that quarter are stated to have then amounted to no more than 1,200,000 silver rubles, and the imports to 1,000,000 ; but a great impulse was given by the incorporation of Georgia with Russia in 1801, and still more by the treaty of Goolistan in 1813-14, when Persia surrendered most of her Caspian provinces, with the rivers running through them into that sea, on which she further bound herself to main-

tain no navy—stipulations which were further extended and confirmed by the peace of Turkmanchai, in 1828, which placed Russia in possession of the mouth and both banks of the *navigable* part of the Araxes—the last river of any magnitude on that side of the Caspian.* The importance which Russia attaches to the monopoly of the Caspian trade, is even more clearly shown by the eagerness with which she has availed herself of her late rapid strides to political supremacy over Turkey and Persia, to close every avenue through which the manufactures of Western Europe, and especially of Great Britain, might find access to Asia. The occupation of the mouths of the Danube (1829); the acquisition from the Porte, in 1829 and 1833, of the mountain districts of Akaltzik and Akalkalik, apparently unimportant, but containing the passes through which British goods reached Georgia and the Caucasus from Trebizond; the seizure of the Circassian harbours and coast; † all passed unnoticed by the ignorance or indifference of our statesmen, who thus, without remonstrance or protest, saw our commerce shut out from every port on the Asiatic shores of the Black Sea, with the single exception of Trebizond. A mortifying contrast to this supineness is presented in the anxiety of the Russian Government to foster and encourage by every means the Asiatic trade, and to open new channels of communication with hitherto unexplored countries; and some idea may be formed of the exertions made for this purpose, from the fact, that on the late occupation of Cabul by our troops, a large quantity of loaf-sugar was found in the bazaars, which, originally from our own West Indian possessions, had been purchased by Russian merchants at Petersburg, and forwarded by the way of Astrakhan, over the Caspian to Asterabad, and thence by land carriage to this remote city!

* See *Progress of Russia in the East*, and the map in the second edition.

† "There is one important fact, which it strikes me I have omitted to mention, viz., the existence of a road, practicable the greater part of its length even for carts, between the Black Sea and the Caspian, commencing near the plain of Anapa. I travelled along it for about thirty miles, and an excellent road it was; and they (the Circassians) assured me it continued nearly as good the whole way to the Caspian. Its importance as a communication with the east shores of the Caspian, and with Khiva, for the importation of our cottons there, by a short cut through a friendly country, is evident."—Note to the *Report on Circassia*, Portfolio, v. 511.

Yet, despite of all these efforts in behalf of the Asiatic trade, and of the concurrent circumstances which tend to render them efficacious, the increasing activity which was at first imparted to it by the exclusive possession of the Black and Caspian seas, has not been permanent. In the course of the last ten or twelve years, the quantity of the exports has gradually undergone a great diminution; while the superior quality and cheapness of English manufactures, notwithstanding the obstacles so sedulously thrown in the way of their introduction, has regained for them the preference in the markets of Asia. As the Russian official returns are not easily accessible, we shall content ourselves with quoting on this point the unimpeachable evidence of two of the continental journals most notoriously in the Russian interest, the *Franconian Mercury* and the *Augsburg Gazette*—the former of which, in January, 1839, showed by a long and elaborate article, that “the Russians have comparatively little trade in Georgia, Circassia, and Persia, and are not likely to improve it, the competition with England having given a death-blow to their commerce in that quarter.” The *Augsburg Gazette* of the 29th and 30th of the same month, enters more into detail. “From 1824 to 1829 (according to this authority), the woollen wares sent over the Caspian, from Russia to Persia, rose from the value of 150,000 to 1,000,000 silver rubles yearly; since 1829, the exports have again fallen to 140,000. In 1824, the sales of woollens to the nomadic tribes amounted to 700,000 rubles; from this it gradually rose to 3,000,000; but in 1834 it had fallen back to 2,200,000. Silks (which, when Tooke wrote, formed nearly the whole amount of the imports by the Caspian, rated by him, as we have already seen, at 1,000,000 silver rubles per annum,) are no longer sent over the Caspian for more than 50,000 rubles annually, and less by way of Georgia. The Turkmans and Kirghizes now buy no more than 100,000 rubles’ worth yearly of Russian manufactures; in 1828, they bought to the amount of 300,000. Russian linen was formerly bought by the hordes to the value of from 250,000 to 400,000 rubles; not more than 100,000 rubles’ worth is now sold. The greatest increase is in iron: the quantity carried year by year across the Caspian rose from 70,000 *poods* (a weight of forty

Russian pounds), to 258,000 in 1829, and 276,000 in 1830; but even this, in 1834, had declined to 244,000 *poods*. The exportation of iron wares by the Caspian, which, in 1829, amounted to 287,000 rubles, has fallen to half that sum." As a general result, the writer in the *Augsburg Gazette* states, that the exports of Russia into Asia, in 1833 and 1834, may be valued at seventeen millions of silver rubles (about 2,750,000*l.*), of which one-fourth was woollen goods:—while in 1832 the exports of England to Asia, *exclusive* of China and India, were to the value of 3,700,000*l.*, one-half of which was for woollens; and, from the increased attention which has been drawn within the last seven years to Asiatic affairs, it may be presumed that the present amount may safely be rated much higher. If even a moderate share of enterprise and exertion be brought into play, a few years may see this trade augmented twenty-fold, from the ready communications now opened with countries where British goods found their way hitherto only by devious and uncertain channels, or which their inland situation rendered wholly inaccessible—but these interests can only be protected and advanced by political predominance. No sooner had Russian intrigue supplanted the influence of England in the councils of the Shah, than the *prohibition of British manufactures immediately followed*; and we may rest assured that, if Russia is suffered without opposition to establish her power in Transoxiana, many years will not elapse before the line of circumvallation will be completed, and not a bale of British goods suffered to make its appearance to the north or west of the Indus.

In the foregoing details, it has been our object to present a picture of the present state of Central Asia, as viewed *from the Russian side of the question*, and to place in clear relief the new combinations by which that power is on the point of assailing us in our altered position; but, in so doing, it is probable that we shall be considered as indulging in a tone of gloomy anticipation by those who, personally unacquainted with the East, and accustomed to look upon our Indian annals as a triumphant progress from victory to victory, have been dazzled by the newspaper *pœans* over our Afghan successes into the belief, that the web

of Russian finesse has been swept utterly away, and British supremacy in the East secured for ever, by the gallantry displayed on the plain of Candahar, and under the walls of Ghuzni. It must, indeed, be at once admitted that the military results of the Cabul expedition justify all that can be said in their favour. The most sanguine of our Indian politicians could not previously have hoped for a triumph so rapid and complete as that which has crowned our arms; but, great as our success in Afghanistan has hitherto been, the English public will have widely erred if they imagine that the glories of a single campaign have terminated the war, or that the *terror of the British name* will suffice, if unsupported by active assistance in troops and money, to retain the Afghans in their forced allegiance to Shah Shooja, or to protect his dominions from attack from the adjacent states. The *principle of unavoidable expansion* (as some writers on India have termed the ever-widening vortex which has carried our arms and influence from Calcutta to Loodiana) has at length passed the natural boundary of the Indus, and entered on a new sphere of action; and even beyond this it has already become apparent, that the policy which dictated to the Indian government the imperative necessity of reinstating Shah Shooja, will speedily point out a further advance as essential to the security of the ground thus gained. A halt in our onward career from the Western bank of the Indus would now, in fact, be attended with consequences as injurious to our interests as a repulse in the first instance could have produced. To be stationary is *impossible*.

If, moreover, we recapitulate the circumstances which attended and preceded the restoration of Shooja to a pageant throne, it will be sufficiently evident that not only can his tenure of that precarious possession be assured only by the continual presence of a disciplined force (whether avowedly Company's troops, or commanded in the name of the Shah by European officers) sufficient to overawe the Afghans, but that the objects of the expedition would be defeated by suffering him to regain such a share of independent power as to induce the hope of sustaining himself unaided. In the debate on the address at the opening of the session of 1839, Sir Robert Peel remarked with justice,

that "the principle was the same in the attempted restoration of Shah Shooja, as it would be in the attempt to restore Charles X. to the throne of France, with this difference, that the Shah had been thirty years dispossessed of his throne"—which Lord John Russell met by the assertion, that "the objects of the expedition was not to extend our own limits, but to defend an old ally." An alliance with Shooja had indeed been concluded by Mr. Elphinstone in 1809, a few weeks only before the battle of Neemla drove him from the throne of Cabul. But so far were the Indian authorities of that day from conceiving themselves bound to aid their ally in the then comparatively easy task of expelling his usurping brother Mahmood, that not even an asylum in the British dominions was offered him, and he was compelled for many years to purchase, by humiliating sacrifices of dignity, and the forced surrender of his treasures and diamonds, including the famous *Koh-i-noor* or "mountain of light," the treacherous hospitality of Runjeet Singh.

In 1822-3, when the Shah, who had some time before escaped from Lahore to Loodiana, made his last effort to recover his crown and kingdom, by the aid of some of the Doorauni clans who were favourable to him, Lord William Bentinck, then Governor-general, expressly refused him all assistance. To a second request, urged when he was in possession of Sind, and on the point of advancing on Candahar, a still more decided negative was returned, though the scale was then so nicely balanced, that (as stated by an able writer in the *Asiatic Journal*) "even the indirect countenance of our government, by the presence of a British agent in the camp of the Shah, might have placed Candahar, if not Cabul, in his possession."* There can be no doubt that the designs entertained at that period by the cabinet of Calcutta tended rather to the opening of relations with the *de facto* rulers of Afghanistan, the Barukzye brothers, of whose character and resources the information of Sir Alexander Burnes has left a favourable impression; and that this consideration influenced the denial of support to the Shah's expedition, which, as is well known, terminated in his overthrow by the Barukzyes near Candahar; and it was only when Dost

* *Asiatic Journal*, February, 1840.

Mohammed proved less subservient to our views than had been anticipated, at the juncture when the advance of a Persian force, guided by Russian generals and diplomatists, against Herat, made a speedy settlement of Afghan politics indispensable, that our "old ally" was drawn from the apparently hopeless obscurity into which his late defeat had plunged him, and sent, surrounded by the ensigns of royalty, and accompanied by an overwhelming British force, to re-ascend the throne of his ancestors.

The plain state of the case, then, is, that it was not till it became a mere question of time from which side of the Indus the first blow should be struck, and the Shah presented himself as a convenient pretext on which to ground our aggression, that any thought of espousing his cause was entertained; and of this fact both the Shah himself and his nominal subjects are fully aware, as the demeanour of prince and people sufficiently proves. All the private correspondence from India agrees in declaring that "Shah Shooja is detested by all his subjects, and that the people of his own tribe even would be the first to cut his throat, if left to their hands," as the sole cause of the calamities and humiliation which have befallen their country: and this feeling, in a haughty and martial nation, is not surprising; but it can scarcely be credited that the monarch whom we have raised from indigence to a throne, and who is entirely dependant on us for support and security, should repay the benefits received otherwise than by unbounded gratitude and confidence. The vanity and arrogance, however, which mainly contributed to the past misfortunes of Shooja, do not appear to have been corrected either by time or adversity. Instead of labouring to unite and conciliate the fierce tribes of which he is placed at the head, he has been principally occupied since his restoration in instituting a tinsel *Order of the Doorauni Empire!* and in reinstating as far as possible the pomp and ceremonies of the ancient court, which had fallen into disuse under Dost Mohammed. Even in the vital point of the political arrangements, he is said to have evinced much wayward impatience at the control to which he found himself subjected; and the insolence of language and manner which not only the Shah himself, but the Afghan Sirdars, whom he has attracted to his court, permit themselves to

use towards the Europeans in command of the subsidiary force, is described* as so insufferable, that several of these officers have thrown up their commissions in disgust. Yet this subsidiary force, which the Shah is bound by treaty to maintain and pay, will form his only protection against a revolt of the discontented Afghans. It will certainly be the only security for the continued predominance of British interests after the main army has been withdrawn, if indeed the state of affairs north of the Hindoo-Koosh does not render it necessary that permanent British garrisons should be established in the vicinity of the passes.

It is evident, therefore, that we can only succeed in retaining the necessary ascendancy in Afghanistan by keeping the Shah in subserviency, and overawing the chiefs and population; and similar measures, as passing events seem to indicate, will at no distant period be requisite in the neighbouring Sikh kingdom of the Punjab. In the few months which have elapsed since the death of the founder of the monarchy, the Maharajah Runjeet Singh, the country seems already to have arrived at the verge of a stormy revolution. Khurruck Singh, his imbecile son and successor, has been virtually deposed after a reign of a few months, not, as was expected, by his brother-in-law Shere Singh, but by his own son, No-Nihal Singh, a youth of twenty-one, characterised as "the Hotspur of the Sikhs," who has, by the aid of Runjeet's favourite minister, Dhian Singh, reduced his father to the condition of a state prisoner, though he allows him to retain the titles and insignia of royalty. This change of government is not looked upon in India as favourable to the stability of the British alliance, to which the old Maharajah, from policy, perhaps, rather than inclination, had always steadily adhered; but these prudential motives are less likely to influence his fiery grandson, surrounded as he is by Sikh military chiefs and French officers,† and apparently apprehen-

* *Asiatic Journal*, February, 1840.

† The adhesion of General Ventura and the French officers to No-Nihal, is particularly remarked by *Le Commerce*, which adds—"The English are doubtless far from pleased at seeing a resolute and independent prince on the throne of the Punjab. Though the change be not directly hostile to them, it will defeat their intention of availing themselves of the weakness of the dethroned Khurruck, and the disturbances it might create to interfere in a country which they are desirous to place under their own domination."

sive, besides, that the British government may consider itself bound, in virtue of treaties, to guarantee to his father the inviolate exercise of the rights of sovereignty. Though no interruption of amicable relations has yet taken place, it is clear that a rupture is viewed by all parties as the probable result of the late occurrences at Lahore; it is even rumoured that permission to cross the Sikh territories has been refused to the troops returning from Cabul, and that a Bengal force of 8000 men has been in consequence assembled on the Sutlej, to watch the course of events. In the meantime the Sikhs are at strife among themselves; and it is suspected that No-Nihal will prove to have been merely a tool in the hands of his uncle, Shere Singh, who aspires to mount the throne through his means. Thus the fate of the Punjab is at present in suspense; but should it become either the seat of an unfriendly government, or a prey to anarchy and civil war, the Anglo-Indian administration will have no alternative but a prompt and decided armed intervention, either taking the country into their own hands, or restoring Khurruck Singh to his throne under British protection, before Russian intrigue has time to step in and play the same part at Lahore which has already been so successfully acted at the court of Teheran. Our alliance with Runjeet has cost us sufficiently dear, if (as it is reported) it was the principal obstacle to the conclusion of a treaty with Dost Mohammed, (which would have rendered the Afghan war needless), because he could not be induced to enter a league to which his hereditary enemy was to be a party. But our successes in Afghanistan will, after all, be worse than useless, if we permit the communication with this boasted "bulwark of India" to be cut off by the existence of a hostile and independent state, whose territories, lining nearly the whole length of the Eastern frontier of Cabul, intervene like a wedge between our new dependencies and the dominions of the Company, and furnish a road by which a northern invader in possession of Turkestan might avoid the Afghan country altogether, and advance unopposed by Badakshan and Attock to the Sutlej.

We have endeavoured to lay before our readers the existing state of the Asiatic question, in which England and Russia are the actors; abstaining as far as the nature of the subject would

permit from speculations on the future, which every day might prove to be futile or erroneous. The events of the last few years have tended in a great measure to dispel the ignorance of everything relative to the Eastern world, by which—to use the words of the able author of the *Progress of Russia in the East*—“from the earliest times in which Russia has had a share in the politics of Europe, her views in the East have been promoted, and which made other Powers her dupes and the instruments of her aggrandizement.” But this tardily acquired knowledge has at the same time shown, that throughout the whole extent of Asia, from the Bosphorus to the Indus (and probably to Canton), British influence has been sapped and supplanted by the ever-active machinations of Russia; and that nothing but vigorous and uncompromising resistance on our part, can now prevent these intrigues from reaching their final accomplishment. The Cabul expedition has been the first symptom of recovery from our long-passive policy; and its good effects have appeared not only in the success of its immediate objects, but in lowering the tone of the Burmese and Ghorkhas; while the prompt dethronement of one or two refractory native princes in India has overawed the rising spirit of insubordination, and left us at the close of the year, what we could scarcely be called at the commencement, the acknowledged and uncontrolled masters of the country. Still the march to Cabul is but a beginning; the gauntlet has been thrown down, and accepted by Russia in her movement on Khiva; but the combat which will decide the destinies of India and Asia is yet to come; and it remains to be seen whether, by perseverance in the career we have at length resumed, we shall hurl our antagonist from the height which our supineness alone has allowed her to attain, or whether, through indecision or false security, we shall lay ourselves open to a blow which will change the future history and fate, not of India or Asia only, but of Europe and the world.

RESULTS OF OUR AFGHAN CONQUESTS.

(Published in August, 1841.)

Two years have now elapsed since the restoration by British bayonets of our newly-adopted protégé, Shah Shooja-al-mulk, to the hereditary throne of Afghanistan, from which thirty years before he had been driven by the chiefs of his own people, was hailed by the almost unanimous acclamations of the English and Anglo-Indian press as effectually terminating all anxieties for the frontier of our Eastern empire, and securing to us the services and alliance of a brave nation, inhabiting a country naturally almost impregnable, and easily to be rendered altogether so by the application of European military science. These satisfactory results, it was indeed admitted, could not be expected to be immediately evident. Time was to be allowed for the tranquillisation of the hostile feelings naturally excited in the minds of the Afghans by the armed occupation of their territory, and the expulsion of their rulers, their preference for whom over the monarch now imposed upon them they had so unequivocally shown. And a writer in the *Asiatic Journal* (vol. xxx. p. 161) even lays down, with commendable candour, as a necessary preliminary for the attainment of a good understanding, "the arduous but gratifying task of reconstructing the social edifice in that unsettled country, where, judging from the description of their various tribes, their mutual animosities, and their joint antipathy to authority, given in Mr. Elphinstone's admirable work, the task of government, even in quiet times, and under a ruler whose title is undisputed, requires almost superhuman powers"! The "gratifying" task thus propounded as indispensable for the realization of the advantages derivable from our victories, would amount, we should think, to a very considerable deduction from their value, even if no further obstacles opposed themselves to its fulfilment; but the "reconstruction" of the political edifice must in this case precede that of the social; and though we have at length pretty effectually succeeded in overturning the order of things which we found

existing, the foundation of the future fabric destined to replace the ruin has even yet been scarcely laid.

It will be remembered that the originally declared objects, for the accomplishment of which the Indus was crossed for the first time by a British force, were twofold—to secure the fortress of Herat from the attacks directed against it, at the scarce concealed instigation of Russia, by the Shah of Persia, the success of which would have converted it into an advanced post for the further prosecution of any designs which might be formed against India; and to acquire a controlling influence over the intervening country of Afghanistan Proper, by the substitution of the friendly dynasty of the Suddozyes for the rule of the Barukzye chiefs, whose policy was beginning to wear an aspect of decided opposition to British interests. The vast complication which the question has already assumed, renders this recapitulation, at the present day, far from unnecessary. From the relief of a border fortress, and the support of an allied prince, by the temporary aid of an auxiliary force, in the recovery of his rightful throne, has sprung the necessity of “either asserting a paramount right of interference within a vast circle, the circumference of which touches the Sutlej, Herat, the Gulf of Persia, and almost the Caspian Sea; or of pursuing a system of conquest and appropriation of territory, the very idea of which would have terrified the critics of Lord Wellesley’s administration.”—(*As. Journ.*) That such would be the probable, if not inevitable, consequences of the hasty policy which first led us to overstep the natural limits of our Eastern empire, we have endeavoured on two former occasions to demonstrate. We shall now proceed to examine how far the events of the past year have verified our anticipations.

From the commencement to the close of the year 1840, our Afghan conquests presented an almost ceaseless succession of petty conflicts and guerilla inroads, from the Uzbek frontiers north of the Hindoo-Koosh to the Belooch tribes in the south, whose country almost touches the Indian Ocean; arising from the fierce but luckily uncombined struggles of the various tribes to shake off the foreign yoke, to which the rapidity of our march, and their own unprepared state, alone compelled them (as they

consider) to submit at first almost without resistance. The results of this harassing and desultory warfare, if viewed in a merely military point of view, have unquestionably been, on the whole, favourable to the British arms, notwithstanding the severe but temporary checks received at Nufoosk and Khelat, from the valour of the Beloochees—a brave race who in the last century defied all the efforts of Ahmed Shah himself to reduce them to more than a nominal dependence on his crown. Tribe after tribe has been crushed into sullen submission to the authority exercised in the name of Shah Shooja; and the throne of the reinstated dynasty has acquired additional stability from the removal of the competitor, Dost Mohammed Khan. This exiled chief had again appeared in arms, early in the autumn, on the northern frontier, at the head of a considerable force, partly composed of such of his Afghan adherents as still followed his fortunes, and partly furnished by the Uzbek rulers in that quarter; but in attempting to penetrate through the passes of the Hindoo-Koosh, he was opposed by a British division, and, after several partial encounters, completely overthrown (Nov. 2,) in the defile of Purwan-Durrah, notwithstanding the shameful misconduct of one* of our regiments of native cavalry, which abandoned its officers in the heat of the action. Thus deprived of all hopes of success in the field, the Afghan leader came to the resolution of throwing himself on the mercy of his victorious enemies; and crossing the country direct from the field of battle, with only a single attendant, reached Cabul almost before the news of his defeat had arrived there, and at once surrendered himself to the English resident. He has since been sent into Hindostan, “leaving behind him,” in the words of the *India Gazette*, “the regrets of his own people, and carrying with him the sympathies of all the gallant British officers by whose agency he has been dethroned.”

The fate of Dost Mohammed, thus sacrificed to a policy, with the interests of which he had no natural connection, must be admitted to be severe, even by the warmest partisans of the measures which have caused his fall; and both his frank and

* The 2nd Bengal Light, since disbanded and erased from the list of the Indian army.

manly demeanour in prosperity, and the magnanimity with which he has borne his present reverses, derive additional lustre from the contrast afforded by the character of his triumphant rival, Shah Shooja. In April 1840, we alluded to a report which had even then become prevalent, that this weak and vicious prince had already shown himself impatient of the restraint imposed upon him by the presence of the British auxiliary force, and was anxious to indulge (as he hoped) in the uncontrolled exercise of his despotic inclinations. The combined folly and ingratitude implied in this alleged conduct on the part of, perhaps, the only individual to whom our march into Afghanistan has been productive of any substantial benefit, at first threw discredit on these suspicions; but transactions have recently come to light which leave little doubt that our royal protégé was actually the prime mover in some of the late insurrectionary outbreaks ostensibly directed against his own authority; and that he is still engaged in endeavouring covertly to bring about a new revolution, which he hopes will at once ingratiate him with his subjects by relieving them from the presence of the British, and leave him to the undisturbed enjoyment of the degrading sensuality in which he is sunk, and in the practice of which his sons are worthy emulators of their father. It is needless to say, that the evacuation of Afghanistan by our forces, by whatever means brought about, would be followed by the instant dethronement, and probably by the death, of Shooja and all his family; but the madness of the conduct attributed to the restored king is no palliation of its perfidy: and even in the event of its becoming necessary to punish his machinations by again dismissing him to the obscurity from which we raised him, the position which we have assumed in Afghanistan must be maintained, by whatever means, or under whatever pretext. We have, in fact, whether justifiably or not, *conquered the country for ourselves*, and we cannot now give it up.

Still, though Afghanistan may be for the moment tranquil, our prospects there are far from cheering. Every day more clearly demonstrates the utter hopelessness of our being able so far to conciliate the natives, as to hold the country merely by

•

the presence of a force sufficient to maintain order, as under an established government: we are hated both as strangers and infidels, and as the interested supporters of an unpopular dynasty; and any disaster which befel our arms, any material reduction of the army of occupation, would be followed by an instant and universal revolt of all the tribes from the Bolan Pass to Bameean, and from Peshawur to the Persian frontier. Even at present not a single rupee of revenue can be levied except by armed detachments; and as the whole country is studded with redoubts and hill-forts, which require to be taken and razed in detail, the collection can only be enforced by an amount of toil and loss to the troops employed, wholly disproportioned to the results: many of the Ghilji districts, and nearly all the strong tract called the Zemindawar, have hitherto refused altogether to acknowledge the authority of the intrusive king: nor have our commanders been able to spare troops for their subjugation. While thus a twofold spirit of disaffection, against the titular sovereign, and against the dominant allies by whom he is supported, prevails among the people, and the only point of concord between the king and his subjects is a common wish to rid themselves of their *soi-disant* protectors, the *ikbal*, or good fortune, which is popularly believed in our Eastern dominions to be inseparable from all the operations of the Company, will be severely taxed to maintain its reputation: and the consolidation of Afghanistan, if ever destined to take place, must be looked upon as a far distant event.

On the side of Herat, again, the state of affairs is even less satisfactory than in Cabul. The Persian invasion of this petty principality was the first provocation, *causa teterrima belli*, to repel which, and to insure the future inviolability of the fortress which commanded the high road to Hindostan, the British standard was first advanced beyond the river which forms the natural boundary of our eastern Empire; and it might reasonably have been supposed that the cultivation of amicable relations with its ruler, who had so successfully withstood the tide of hostility, would have been our principal diplomatic care after the first triumph of our arms in Afghanistan. An envoy was, indeed, despatched to Herat soon after the conquest of Candahar,

and a liberal subsidy assigned to the authorities for the maintenance of the defences of the place; but the reigning prince, Kamran, and his powerful minister Yar-Mohammed Khan, (a man of extraordinary abilities, but of an unscrupulous and perfidious disposition,) showed themselves from the first averse to the intrusion of foreign interference, and indignant at the elevation of the rival branch of the Suddozye family to the throne of Cabul;—and early in last year it had become notorious (as we stated in April 1840,) that Yar-Mohammed had deserted the British party, and was lending a favourable ear to the propositions of Russia. The subsequent progress of events in this remote and isolated quarter cannot easily be traced with accuracy, as the accounts transmitted to England relative to the negotiations are remarkably vague, and even contradictory; but their result was, that early in the present year, Major Todd, our resident at Herat, precipitately quitted that city, and made the best of his way, with a few followers, to Candahar, having received what he considered authentic intelligence of the advance of a Persian force for the purpose of occupying the place as friends, at the invitation of Yar-Mohammed. It soon became known, however, that Todd had been duped by the crafty vizier, who was only anxious to rid himself of his surveillance: and that, so far from meditating a fresh attack, the Shah was at the moment agreeing to give up, on the demand of England, the fort of Ghorian, on the frontier of the Herat territory, which he had held since the former invasion. Still British influence at Herat is, for the time, utterly annihilated; and while Shah Shooja is vehemently suspected (as we before noticed) of plotting at Cabul, for the withdrawal of the troops which maintain him on his uneasy throne, Kamran and his minister are known to be intriguing with all the chiefs in their own vicinity for the removal of Shooja, and the restoration of Kamran as representative of the elder branch. *Therefore* (says the *Bombay Times*), “Herat must be taken and annexed to the Doorani empire; its sovereign has proclaimed himself a traitor. And yet the occupation of a territory, 700 miles from our East Indian frontier, and whose revenue does not exceed 60,000*l.*, might cost us more than it is worth.”

Without stopping to controvert the charge of treason brought against Kamran, in the passage just quoted, for his opposition to a monarch whose title is neither, according to European nor Oriental notions, superior to his own, and has never been acknowledged by him—it is curious to contrast the tone of the last clause with the all-engrossing importance attached, only two years since, to the preservation of this now despised territory. It is not, in fact, till the value of Herat for our purposes has comparatively passed away, from the increasing anarchy and weakness of Persia, and the repulse of the Russians in Transoxiana, that the crisis has arrived which we anticipated in January 1839, when the refusal of Kamran to submit to the supremacy of his nephew Shooja, or to make his whole conduct subservient to our own policy, would leave us no alternative between seeing Herat turned into a stronghold for our enemies, or forcibly taking it into our own hands—an odious and ungrateful act, which has probably ere this been perpetrated. The last advices stated, that a column of from 8000 to 9000 men, with a battering train, &c., was in the course of equipment with all speed at Sukkur on the Indus, for the purpose of advancing through the passes, and by the route of Girishk, to Herat, and either compelling Kamran to receive a garrison within the walls of his capital, or of dethroning him in case of resistance, and incorporating his dominions with Afghanistan. Thus, while Russia repairs by intrigue the checks received in the field, the errors of our diplomatists, on the contrary, are to be rectified, as usual, by an appeal to the sword; though so ill can the troops be spared for this new demonstration, that Sukkur, an open town wherein are deposited all the stores of grain and provisions for the main army, will be left protected by only a single weak regiment without artillery, against the not improbable treachery of the chiefs of Sind. What, then, would have been our condition, if the Russians had succeeded (as there was every probability of their doing) in occupying Khiva last year? in which case the appeal of the Herattees for aid would have been promptly responded to by the march of a force from Transoxiana, and we should have found the battlements, recently repaired by Indian gold, defended against us by the troops of that “faithful

ally," our jealousy of whose designs first led us into the vortex of trans-Indian politics.

On the side of Transoxiana, indeed, a principal source of apprehension has been removed during the past year, by the total failure of the Russian expedition against Khiva—a failure which the Russians themselves ascribe, with considerable show of reason, to the unusual severity of the weather, the mortality among the camels, and the consequent famine and disease which thinned the ranks of the invading force; though we have also heard it attributed in some measure to the incapacity of the commander-in-chief, General Peroffski, a junior officer (as it is said) of no great experience or ability, who owed his appointment on this arduous service to the personal favour of the emperor. The Russian accounts are of course sedulously vague and indefinite; but it appears certain, at all events, that this formidable armament (the strength of which we stated in detail last year), after penetrating only a short distance from the Russian nominal frontier on the Emba, was compelled to effect a retreat upon Orenburg, with the complete loss of its baggage and *matériel*, arriving there in as disastrous a state of demoralisation, as the shattered columns under Witgenstein appeared on the banks of the Danube, when driven from before Shumla in the winter of 1828—a spectacle which will not soon be forgotten by those whose fortune it was to witness it. A second attack upon the Khivans was indeed loftily talked of at Petersburg; and rumours were industriously put in circulation by the agents of Russia, even up to the Indian frontier, that Khiva had actually fallen, and that the victorious legions of the *White Khan* were in full march for Herat and the Hindoo-Koosh; but these fanfaronades were speedily replaced by the pacific announcement, that the emperor had graciously accepted the mediation of the Anglo-Indian government, and that the differences between Russia and Khiva were in the course of adjustment by British employés. Captain Abbott and Lieutenant Shakspear accordingly proceeded from India into Transoxiana, and found little difficulty in persuading Allah-Kooli Khan, who had been thoroughly alarmed by the impending danger, to pledge himself to the discontinuance of the plundering and man-stealing forays

*which his subjects had been in the habit of directing against the Russian frontier, as well as to deliver up all the Russians detained in slavery within his territories. These stipulations having been fulfilled, and the Russian slaves delivered up to Mr. Shakspear, who escorted them in person to their native country, a similar restitution was made on the part of Russia, of the Khivan merchandise which had been seized within the empire on the declaration of war; and the re-establishment of pacific relations was formally notified, near the close of last year, in the *Petersburg Gazette*. The terms in which this official document is couched merit attention, as affording a fair average instance of the extent to which the *suppressio veri* is carried in the communication of political intelligence by the Russian government to its subjects. No allusion whatever is made either to the ill success of the expedition under Peroffski, or to British intervention; but, after detailing the aggressions complained of, and the advance of a force to repel and punish them, the *Gazette* proceeds to state, that "this measure of retaliation, even before it had been fully put into effect, had sufficed to convince the enemy of the utter ruin which must result from continuance in their hostile conduct; that the khan, therefore, had thrown himself on the clemency of the emperor, released all the captives, and published a firman prohibiting further acts of depredation; and that his imperial majesty, finding that the Khivans had purely and simply satisfied the principal object demanded, had condescended to admit the appearance of a Khivan ambassador at Petersburg, and to authorise the re-establishment of a commercial intercourse," &c. &c.*

It is obvious, therefore, that the luckless campaign of General Peroffski has had the effect, not only of materially weakening the prestige of Russian power in Central Asia, but of investing us with a controlling influence over at least one of the Uzbek states: such as it would have been almost impossible for us to have acquired by any means previously within our reach. Negotiations have also been commenced with the more remote sovereignty of Kokan or Ferghana (in the N. E. quarter of Transoxiana), to the capital of which Lieutenant Conolly has proceeded by the invitation of the khan; and there can be no

doubt that the openings thus afforded, if improved with only common diligence, will, in a few years, lead to the extension of British commerce, not only through the vast regions of Transoxiana and Turkestan (in which, as we showed in April last year, our manufactures were already rapidly supplanting those of Russia), but probably also in the western provinces of Chinese Tartary and Mongolia, with which we shall then be in immediate contact, and which are at present supplied almost wholly by caravans from China Proper. Even the Kirghiz, whose territory, though nominally subject to Russia, is beyond the line of the Russian *douane*, would in this case receive in abundance, by the streams of the Sirr and the Oxus, the woollens and linen of England, which already reach them in considerable quantities through Persia. The commercial advantages to be derived from a predominance in Mawara'nahr, cannot, in fact, be more clearly shown than by the passage which we extracted, in the article above referred to, from the Russian work of General Mouraviev, and by the statistical details there given from the *Augsburg Gazette*, on the already declining trade of Russia in that quarter—advantages which the political events of the last twelve months have thrown most completely into the power of the English. But, on the other hand, it must be borne in mind, that in opening diplomatic relations with these semi-barbarous principalities, and in coming forward to shield the Khivans from the second attack with which they were menaced, we have in effect made ourselves responsible both for the safety and the good conduct of the Uzbeks, and are bound to exercise the supremacy thus assumed, as occasion may require, for either their protection or coercion. Neither of these objects, however, can be effected without the presence of a military force in Transoxiana; and, even in the event of neither contingency arising, it would be idle to expect that the impression produced by our interference in behalf of Khiva can long retain its hold over the tribes of Mawara'nahr, unless supported by an adequate display of visible and tangible power. The Khan of Khiva, indeed (according to the *Bombay Times* of August 29), “seems dubious of our position without troops, and asks, very naturally, where is your army?”—and,

further, doubts of the reality of British power may reasonably be expected to suggest themselves to this Uzbek chief, from the impunity with which we have suffered the ruler of Bokhara, whose frontier is almost within the sound of our cannon, to detain, imprison, and persecute Colonel Stoddart, the accredited envoy of our government. It is necessary, therefore, that we should be at least prepared with the means of making a military demonstration in this direction whenever circumstances demand it; but not a gun, not a company, can be spared for this purpose from the force now in Afghanistan; which, already barely adequate for the harassing duties required of it through the vast extent over which it is dispersed, is on the point of being further weakened by the separation of the division to be directed against Herat.' Nor can the deficiency be supplied from the Bengal establishment, which, exclusive of the corps of observation kept up at Nepaul and Burmah, and the draughts necessary to keep up the effective strength of the Chinese expedition after the ravages of the Chusan fever, will require every disposable regiment for the operations against the Sikhs, which, as the state of the Punjaub renders evident, cannot be long delayed. Here, then, is another reason which imperatively calls for the augmentation of the army in India.

Thus our conquests in Afghanistan (the originally-declared intention of which was, by a temporary occupation of the country, and its re-settlement under a stable and recognised monarchy, to provide a secure and permanent rampart to India on the N. W.) have already become, by the operation of the *principle of unavoidable expansion* (to recur to a favourite phrase of writers on India), the *centre* of a new sphere of action, the future extent or magnitude of which it is as yet impossible to conjecture. The Doorauni kingdom, the vaunted buttress of our Eastern empire, requires (it now appears) to be itself propped and fenced in by the subjugation or coercion of nearly all the states on its borders! In the late campaign against Dost Mohammed north of the Hindoo-Koosh, the British banner was displayed at the eastern extremity of Transoxiana, and actual hostilities took place with the Uzbeks of the mountain state of Koondooz, the ruler of which, Mourad

Beg,* is himself a conqueror on a small scale, and likely ere long to give us further trouble. The hill-country, or *Kohistan* of Koondooz, is all which intervenes between Afghanistan and the rich plain of Bokhara—a country against which the wrongs inflicted on Colonel Stoddart have given us better grounds of quarrel than existed with any of the states beyond the Indus against which our arms have been hitherto directed, and which therefore, we presume, will not be suffered to escape without due chastisement. Khiva, as we have shown, must henceforth be looked upon as a voluntary vassal of our empire, the *shadow* of which (to use a Turkish phrase) has thus extended, in barely two years, from the Indus to the Kirghiz steppes! To what extent similar results may follow to the west of Afghanistan, when the threatened occupation of Herat has been carried into effect, can at present only be surmised; but it is not likely that in that quarter only an exception will be made, and our frontier remain stationary.

But while the aspect of affairs beyond the Indus is thus daily becoming more complicated and difficult, a fresh call on the energies of the Anglo-Indian army is impending on the left bank of that river, where the appropriation of the Punjab, the fair realm of our late “faithful ally,” Runjeet Singh, is spoken of as almost immediately inevitable. That the British must be the eventual heirs of the old Maharajah, could never have been doubted for an instant by any one in the smallest degree conversant with Indian affairs; and our present position in Afghanistan makes still more indispensable to us the possession of a country through which lies the only practicable military road from the Upper Provinces of the Bengal presidency to our trans-Indian posts, and the hostility of which might at any time impede the sending reinforcements to our troops in that quarter. Still it would have been desirable, had circumstances permitted, to postpone the execution of this important measure till either the augmentation of our army, or the tranquillisation of some of the numerous points on which it is now engaged, might enable

* An account of this marauding chief, his subjects, and territory, will be found in the *Travels of Moorcroft*, who narrowly escaped from his clutches, after a long detention.

us to commence operations on an adequate scale; but the rapidity with which, during the last few months, the affairs of the Sikh nation have been hurrying on towards a crisis, leave us no alternative but either to step in with a speedy and effectual intervention, or to see the Punjab relapse into the same disorderly form of a federative republic, under a number of hostile and independent chiefs, from which it was raised by its consolidation under Runjeet. The annexation to our territory of the rich plains of the *Indian Netherlands* (as some have called the Punjab), will form one of the most important eras which have occurred in Anglo-Indian history since the overthrow of the Mysorean power in the south. But before we proceed to discuss the political bearings of this question, it will be well to give a preliminary sketch of the history and former institutions of the Sikhs, the character of whose community is very imperfectly understood in England, particularly in those points which constitute their separation, both as a nation and a religious sect, from all the tribes and castes of the Hindus.

The word *Sikh* is of Sanscrit derivation, and literally signifies a "disciple," or one attached to some particular sect; but it has long since been appropriated, as both a religious and a national title, by the followers of Gooroo Nanuk, a famous teacher, who was born in a village of the Punjab about A.D. 1470. His family were Hindus, of the military caste; but his naturally mild and contemplative disposition led him to embrace the life of a fakeer, or religious devotee, and he spent many years in devout exercises, and the performance of distant pilgrimages. But his wanderings were not restricted to the shrines hallowed by Hindu superstition; he also visited Mekka and other sites revered by the Moslems, and, returning at length to his native country, commenced the promulgation of a new religious system, the avowed object of which was to reconcile the antagonist creeds of Hinduism and Islam, and thus to terminate the devastating wars which continually laid waste Hindustan. Though he made no distinct pretensions to divine revelation, his followers have constantly regarded as a sacred work of unquestionable authority, the *Adi Granth*, or volume, in which he set forth the rule of his new doctrine, the leading tenets of which were, the unity of God,

and the duty of benevolence towards all living creatures. Thus, while the Moslem convert was enjoined to respect the prejudices of the Hindu, by abstaining from the slaughter of cows, and other actions viewed as abominable by the followers of Bramah, the Hindu was exhorted to forsake the debasing idolatry which had become engrafted on the pure and simple theism of former ages, and to unite with the Moslem in the worship of a single and indivisible Supreme Being. The new sect met with greater success among Hindus than Moslems; but, as its votaries made no attempt to assume political power, they were left unmolested for nearly a century, during which period their tenets were extensively disseminated by the assiduity of their Gooroos, or apostles, nine of whom, in succession from Gooroo Nanuk, were acknowledged as the spiritual heads of the Sikhs. The Punjab continued to be their head-quarters; and, in 1574, the Gooroo Ramdas built the town and tank of Amritsir, "the Spring of Immortality" (originally named from the founder, Ramdaspoor), at a spot about thirty miles from Lahore, which he appointed as a place of general pilgrimage and reunion.

But the evil days of the Sikhs were now at hand. The rapid increase of their numbers, and the foundation of Amritsir, had awakened the jealousy of the ruling powers; and their inoffensive character was insufficient to protect them from a furious persecution which broke out in 1584, and of which Arjimnal, the successor of Ramdas, was one of the first victims. The Hindu rajahs, who execrated them as renegades, and the Moslems, who involved all infidels in equal condemnation, vied with each other in their efforts to suppress them; and the hostility shown by the latter, which was viewed by the Sikhs as wholly unprovoked on their part, gave rise to the bitter and vindictive feelings of animosity with which they are still regarded by the children of Nanuk. The Sikhs were at last driven to take arms in their own defence; but during the ensuing century their power continued to wane, till, in 1675, their character and institutions underwent a total transformation through the instrumentality of Govind, the tenth and last of the spiritual Gooroos, who perceived that nothing but vigorous measures could save the sect from utter extermination by the

unsparing bigotry of Aurungzebe. The volume propounded as a supplement to the *Grinth* by this daring reformer, at once converted the Sikhs into fierce and armed fanatics, who were commanded to defend and propagate their religion, like the Moslems, by the edge of the sword, and to slay or reduce to tribute all who resisted.* In order more strongly to mark the isolation of his people, he struck at once at the root of all Hindu observances, by decreeing the summary abolition of caste—declaring that, as the four ingredients of the *betel* mixture became all of one colour when chewed, so the four grand divisions established by the Brahminical law would lose their distinctive peculiarities when fused into one nation; while, by the adoption of the title *Singh*, or “lion,” as the general surname of his followers, he asserted for them an equality with the haughty Rajpoots, by whom it had before been exclusively borne. The influx of enthusiastic proselytes from the lower castes, who were eager to share in the prospect of liberty and equality thus suddenly thrown open, justified the anticipations of Gooroo Govind so far, that they sufficed to save the Sikh name from the annihilation which was on the point of overtaking it; but they were still compelled to bend for the time to the resistless power of Aurungzebe, and their leader, after numerous vicissitudes of fortune, died in concealment.

With Govind terminated the series of the Sikh patriarchs, whose authority was thenceforward replaced by that of the *Gooroo-Mata*, or national diet—a convocation instituted by Govind himself, and which continued to meet at Amritsir, on occasions of emergency, till the commencement of the present century—the last meeting being on the appearance of the British army in the Punjab, during the war with Holkar in 1805. During the short and disturbed reigns of the successors of Aurungzebe, the fortunes of the Sikhs fluctuated. Proscribed and slaughtered without mercy whenever the state of Hindustan allowed the court of Delhi to pour a preponderating force into the Punjab, they reassumed the ascendancy in that province when the imperial armies were drawn off, coining money, and

* The pacific doctrines of Nanuk are still held by a small number called *Udarks*, from whom the Gooroos or priests are usually selected.

assuming all the attributes of independent sovereignty—till the memorable invasion of India by Nadir Shah, in 1737, followed by the repeated inroads of the founder of the Afghan monarchy, Ahmed Doorauni, wrought a total change in the political aspect of the empire, and for ever wrested the Punjab from the grasp of the falling house of Timoor. The Sikhs had now to dispute possession with the Afghans; but the latter maintained the ascendant during the life of their warlike monarch, Ahmed Shah, who gained repeated advantages over his antagonists, and in 1762 overthrew them with such carnage, that 20,000 Sikh heads were piled in pyramids on the field of battle, and the walls of the mosques which had been desecrated by their presence were washed with the blood of the slain by way of atonement! But the fanaticism of the Sikhs, equally indomitable with that of the Moslems, rose undismayed after every reverse; and when Ahmed was succeeded, in 1773, by the indolent and enervated Timoor, they found little difficulty in expelling the Afghan garrisons from Lahore and the other towns, and assuming the rank of an independent and powerful nation.

The republican form of government which had succeeded the patriarchal sway of the Gooroos, had been by this time moulded into a sort of federative commonwealth, divided into twelve *missuls*, or associations, each of which, though really independent under its own chief or *serdar*, and often at war with its neighbours, paid a nominal deference to the supreme authority of the Gooroo-Mata, and joined its forces with those of the others to repel any invasion from the Moslems—the united armament of the whole being rated at about 70,000 men, chiefly cavalry. The feudal system prevalent in India was copied in a great measure in their civil and military institutions: the lands of the missul being subdivided into fiefs, held each by a zemindar, who was not only responsible to the serdar for the rent or land-tax, but led his contingent to join the chief in war; the supreme administration of civil and criminal justice in each missul was, however, vested solely in the serdar, whose decisions were regulated by the *Grinth*, or rather by the interpretations put on the sacred volume by his Gooroos or spiritual advisers. Of one of these missuls (though far from the most considerable), the

chief, during the latter years of Ahmed Shah, was Churut Singh, by birth a Jat, from the neighbourhood of Bhurtpore, whose remarkable valour and capacity had not only raised him from the rank of a common robber to that of serdar, but enabled him to transmit his authority to his son, Maha Singh, who, though a minor when his father fell in battle, in 1774, supported with such ability the rank bequeathed to him, both in peace and war, that at his death, in 1792, his reputation as a serdar was exceeded by none in the Sikh nation; and his son, Runjeet Singh, though only twelve years old, was admitted without question as his successor, though his mother continued, for four years longer, to act as his guardian.

His first act, when in possession of supreme power, is generally said to have been the procuration of death to his mother by poison, as a punishment for disgracing his father's memory by a criminal intrigue with her treasurer; but such an act of unnatural severity is at variance with the tenor of his whole life,* and is far from being proved by sufficient evidence. But in the following year (1796) the Punjab was again invaded by an overwhelming Afghan force under Shah Zemaun (the elder brother of Shooja-al-mulk), who aspired to tread in the steps, and emulate the conquests, of his grandfather, Ahmed Shah; and though domestic revolts, and the attacks of the Persians in the west, prevented the prosecution of his schemes of ambition, this fresh apparition of the Doorauni chivalry on the east of the Indus elicited a sensation which spread far into Hindustan, and produced a universal panic among the Sikh serdars, who were far too disunited to offer any combined resistance, and aimed only at temporising with the Shah by pretended submission. This political crisis afforded the youthful Runjeet a golden opportunity for the exercise of his intriguing genius, of which he availed himself to the utmost, and at the expense of both parties, during the succeeding campaigns of Shah Zemaun; till, on the final retreat of the Afghan king in 1799, he succeeded, as a reward for the restoration of some guns which had been sunk in a sand-bank of the Ravee, in obtaining from him a

* He never punished criminals with death, even for attempting his own life; though mutilation, &c., was liberally practised upon all classes of offenders.

grant of the city of Lahore, with its dependencies, which he occupied accordingly, and continued ever afterwards to retain.

From this period his rise was uninterrupted. In 1803, he was already recognised as the virtual head of the Sikh nation; and in 1811, having completed the subjugation of the twelve *missals*, he assumed the style of *maharajah*, or king, thus formally converting the Sikh republic into an absolute monarchy. During the subsequent decline and fall of the Doorauni empire, its rich out-lying provinces were successively dismembered from Afghanistan, and annexed to the new realm of the Sikhs: Peshawer and Moultan were subdued in 1818; Kashmeer shared their fate in the following year; and the battle of Noushro, in 1823, effectually turned the scale against the Afghans, who were reduced thenceforward to a defensive policy. The first intercourse between the Sikh prince and the English rulers of India arose in 1808, when, in consequence of his continued encroachments on the Sikh chiefs between the Sutlej and the Jumna, a body of Bengal troops advanced into the disputed territory. But his sagacity quickly perceived the inadequacy of his irregular army to contend with the disciplined battalions of the Company; and a convention was concluded in April, 1809, which fixed the Sutlej as the boundary. From this time to the death of Runjeet, his amicable relations with the Ahglo-Indian government continued undisturbed; and his interviews on the frontier with Lord William Bentinck and Lord Auckland, will long be remembered for their gorgeous displays of oriental pomp and military pageantry. The organisation of part of his forces on the European model, from which he has derived so much celebrity in Europe, was originally undertaken about 1814, under the superintendence of deserters from the Company's army; but the arrival at Lahore, in 1822, of two French officers who had served with distinction under Napoleon, MM. Ventura and Allard, gave a fresh impulse to this military experiment. Numerous other European officers made their appearance in the Punjab; and at the time of his death, Runjeet possessed 25,000 regular infantry, considered by Sir Alexander Burnes as equal in discipline and effectiveness to

the sepoy of the Company,* besides cavalry, and a formidable train of artillery; independent of a host of irregular marauding horse (the old Sikh array), which swelled his aggregate force to between 70,000 and 80,000 men.

The foregoing details will be sufficient to show the cause which conduced to the aggrandisement of the late sovereign of the Punjab, as well as to explain the important changes, both in the political and social aspect of his dominions, which resulted from his attainment of undivided power. It will not be necessary for our present purpose to give more than a brief recapitulation of the diplomatic arrangements in which he took a part with the cabinet of Calcutta, in the last years of his life for the settlement of Afghanistan. The inveterate hostility both political and religious, which had long existed between the maharajah and Dost Mohammed, was found an insuperable obstacle to the conclusion of any league which should bind these two chiefs to combine, as subsidised allies of the British Government, for the maintenance of the integrity of the north-western frontier against the intrigues of Persia and Russia; and our long friendship with Runjeet, as well as his superiority in military strength, decided the rulers of India to reject the proposition of Dost Mohammed for a separate treaty, and to form an offensive and defensive alliance with the Sikh sovereign. The consequences of this line of policy were not slow in developing themselves. Left single-handed to maintain himself against the Sikhs on one side, and against the invasion with which he was speedily threatened from Persia on the other, Dost Mohammed took the only course left open to him, and commenced negotiations with the Shah, then encamped before Herat. But this inevitable measure of self-preservation being declared an act of overt hostility against the English, who had

* Captain Osborne, however, (*Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh*, p. 158, &c.) thinks that the efficiency of these troops, excepting the artillery, has been much overrated, and that Runjeet himself was well aware that the principal advantage to be derived from their maintenance, was the awe with which they inspired his refractory sardars. In the battle of Jumrood, against the Afghans, in 1837, some of the crack regiments broke their ranks when ordered to advance, exclaiming that drill was all very well on parade, but in battle they must fight their own way. Captain Osborne, however, admits that, if better officered and regularly paid, they may become very serviceable troops.

before refused his offered alliance, was immediately followed by the famous coalition for the restoration of Shah Shooja. The advance of a Sikh corps from Peshawer towards Cabul, was the only effective co-operation in the war on the part of Runjeet, who doubtless congratulated himself on seeing the humiliation of his foe undertaken by other hands. He did not live, however, to witness the complete downfall of Dost Mohammed—dying at Lahore of a fever produced by his excesses, June 27, 1839, or little more than a month before the flight of the Afghan chief from Cabul.

The succession had been guaranteed by the treaties with the British Government, to Khurruck Singh, the only acknowledged son of the maharajah, who accordingly mounted the throne without opposition. But the mental and bodily imbecility of this prince almost disqualified him from taking any active part in the management of affairs; and after a few months, he was virtually deposed (as we stated in April, 1840) by his own son, No-Nihal Singh, who assumed the reins of government under the title of *hoonwur*, or regent, with the co-operation of Rajah Dhian Singh, the ablest and most trusted minister of his grandfather. But the measures pursued by this fiery young prince and his counsellor (who, even during the life of Runjeet, had been the head of the anti-English party) speedily assumed so decidedly hostile a character as to render a rupture inevitable; petty acts of aggression against the British dependencies, committed by the Sikh serdars on the frontier, were openly connived at, and all explanation refused to our agent at Lahore; and it was even currently reported that *hoondces*, or bills, to the amount of fifteen lakhs of rupees (150,000*l.*), had been intercepted on their way across the Hindoo-Koosh to Dost Mohammed, then in arms in Turkestan. Such an overture as this on the part of the Sikh prince (if the rumour were well founded) to his hereditary and national enemy, would argue an extreme degree of animosity against the British, which appears to have been confirmed by his whole conduct during his short career. On one occasion, he is even said to have drawn his sword in full *durbar*, throwing the scabbard on the ground, and giving vent, in the presence of his chiefs, to the most unmeasured invectives

against the *Feringis*. But the rule of this Sikh Hotspur (as the *Asiatic Journal* terms him) was not destined to be of long continuance. His father, Khurruçk, died on the 5th of November last year; and in attending the obsequies in the course of the same day, No-Nihal was so severely injured by the fall of a beam, *said* to have been displaced by the crush of the elephants in a narrow gateway, that he expired in a few hours, at the age of twenty-one, thus terminating the direct male line of Runjeet.

However suspicious may have been the circumstances attending the death of No-Nihal, no party in the state appears to have been prepared to profit, at the moment of the event, by the confusion and anarchy which immediately resulted from it. Shere Singh, the *adopted** son of Runjeet, whose personal qualities had rendered him a favourite with the army, at first succeeded in seizing the throne: but counter claims were set up by two of the *ranees* or queens, the mother and widow of No-Nihal, each of whom gained over by largesses and promises a part of the soldiery, and invoked the aid of the British; till Shere Singh, finding his position precarious, agreed, after some vacillation, to abdicate in favour of the elder of these two princesses, who thereupon assumed the titles of sovereignty. But the retirement of Shere Singh was merely temporary: he speedily reappeared before Lahore (Jan. 1841), at the head of a large body of partisans whom he had levied in the hill districts; and, being joined by Dhian Singh and a large portion of the regular army, compelled the queen, after some severe fighting and considerable bloodshed, to return to her old quarters in the zenana, leaving him in possession of the kingdom. His capacity for government has not, however, proved equal to his military talents: and all recent accounts represent the Punjab, since his accession, as a prey to the excesses of the turbulent troops, and to mal-administration of all kinds, before which the reforms and improvements introduced by Runjeet are fast disappearing; while most of the European officers have been driven to take

* Shere Singh was the son of one of Runjeet's principal wives; but as the maharajah had been long absent from Lahore previous to his birth, he constantly refused to acknowledge him as his *legitimate* offspring, though he advanced him to a high rank, and made him viceroy of Kashmeer.

refuge in the British territories, and the country is plundered without mercy by the disbanded soldiers, and the *Akalees* (a sort of predatory Sikh fanatics.) In the meantime, the dagger and the cup have been in active operation; the old ranee, the temporary occupant of the throne, has been murdered by the chiefs of Shere Singh's party; and death or confiscation has been the fate of all the serdars opposed to the faction now predominant. "So long," says the Indian correspondence, "as Shere Singh abstains from any act that would restore the army to anything like discipline, he is suffered to occupy the throne; but the first measure he may adopt for the restoration of good order and tranquillity, will, we are assured, involve his expulsion from authority."

Such is the existing situation of the Punjab: and, though the conduct of Shere Singh, far from evincing any tendency to the hostile line adopted by No-Nihal, has been marked by an apparent solicitude to conciliate the friendship of his powerful neighbours, it is evident that the dictates of self-interest, which form the rule of Anglo-Indian policy, will not long admit of our remaining tranquil spectators of the convulsions of a country on the state of our relations with which so much is depending. There can be little question, indeed, that Shere Singh would gladly purchase, at any price, a new treaty which would fortify his own tottering power by the guarantee of a British defensive alliance; and it is not impossible that matters may be patched up in this way for some little time longer; but even in this case, it appears doubtful whether anything short of the presence of a British subsidiary force will enable him sufficiently to coerce his own mutinous regiments and refractory serdars, so as to have it in his power to fulfil any stipulations into which he may enter: and whether the insurrectionary movements of the people, or the inability of the prince to act up to his engagements, be assumed as the pretext for invasion, the practical results will be the same—the country will become, in fact if not in name, a British province. At present, indeed, though all accounts agree in considering it "impossible that affairs can be suffered to proceed in the Punjab without an active and immediate interference," there is a variance as to the ostensible ground which is

to be taken for the aggression ; and one report even asserts that a formal demand has been made on Shere Singh for the cession of the provinces of Kashmeer and Moultan as inalienable appendages of the restored Doorauni empire ; and that his surrender of them is to be rewarded by his recognition and support on the throne of Lahore. *If this report prove well founded, it will certainly afford an instance of political profligacy almost without parallel, since it is well known that the failure of the negotiation attempted some years since with Dost Mohammed, was principally owing to his resolute refusal to accede to any arrangement which should guarantee to Runjeet the undisturbed possession of these very provinces—the chief of Cabul declaring, with the fearless frankness which characterised him, that nothing should prevent him, if he were ever sufficiently powerful, from reclaiming by arms the territories rent from his country by the “ infidel debauchee ” at Lahore.* Yet, on the other hand, it is equally well known that it was only by the surplus revenue of these rich tracts that the splendour of the former Doorauni monarchy was supported in its days of prosperity ; the income derivable from Afghanistan Proper, after their loss, never being adequate to the expenditure. At the present time, when scarce any revenue can be levied from the subjects of the new kingdom except at the point of English bayonets, and a large subsidiary force has to be maintained in addition to the current expenses, the deficit in the Cabul exchequer must be, of course, enormously greater ; and the drain on the Calcutta treasury, on which the ultimate responsibility falls, has already become so severe, that a new five per cent. loan was set on foot in March last, under a very unfavourable aspect of the money market. In this emergency, we fear that the scheme of recruiting the finances of a country which we hold in vassalage, by the dismemberment of a kingdom which is still independent, bears too close a resemblance to many former strokes of Anglo-Indian policy, not to wear an air of considerable probability.

But, even if the fate of the Punjab be delayed for a time by the acceptance of Kashmeer and Moultan as an instalment, its ultimate appropriation is not the less inevitable. There can be no probability, at least for several years to come, that the

country can become sufficiently settled, or any party sufficiently strong, to insure the execution of the terms which we might impose by treaty; and our tenure of Afghanistan can never be secure, if we do not possess a commanding ascendancy at Lahore. Had the death of Runjeet occurred four or five years earlier, and his dominions passed into our hands as they are now on the point of doing, we should have been spared the commission of those political errors, the consequences of which have as yet scarcely begun to develop themselves. With the Indus* for our frontier from Attock to the sea, and a flotilla of armed steamers navigating its waters, we might have either dispensed altogether with the Afghans, or overawed them by our proximity in the event of their evincing hostile dispositions. At that time our mistrust of the wily maharajah's good faith was alleged as one of the most cogent reasons for occupying ground of defence in advance of his country. At the present day, we are told that we must seize the Punjab, because our communications with Afghanistan cannot be securely kept up without it! But on the other hand, those who were warmest in their commendations of the policy of the Anglo-Indian government in its attack on Cabul, admitted that the necessity for this extreme measure would not have existed, if our line of defensible frontier had not been rendered incomplete by the independence of the Sikhs. The irresistible inference then is, even on the showing of those most favourable to the other side of the question, that as soon as the Company's standard is hoisted at Attock and Lahore, our acquisitions in Afghanistan will cease to be more than a useless encumbrance, from which we cannot withdraw with either honour or safety, and which can only be held at an enormous expense, and by keeping up there a disproportionately large military force; while, so far from being capable of being made a remunerating source of revenue, it is impossible to extract from them even the current expenses of their own administration. This may be considered a gloomy, but it is by no means an unfaithful picture of the dilemma in which our Indian government is apparently on the point of becoming involved; and upon the

* One of the Mogul emperors truly characterised the Indus as the "town-ditch of Delhi."

policy to be pursued during the next few years, will probably depend the fortune of a crisis, which may either establish on a surer basis the unwieldy fabric of our Eastern empire, or pave the way for its disruption and eventual dissolution.

In the foregoing remarks we have endeavoured, as far as the nature of the subject would permit, to keep clear of theoretical argument, and simply to lay before our readers an unvarnished statement of the results, as at present existing, of that grand stroke of Anglo-Indian policy which has so fully verified the prophetic warning of the Duke of Wellington, that "it is impossible for England to engage in a *little war*." The military promenade for the restoration of Shah-Shooja, (for it seems to have been at first considered as amounting to little more,) has already expanded into the permanent occupation of a vast country, where everything beyond the range of our guns is hostile; while the treasury at Calcutta is drained almost to the last rupee, and fresh demands are daily made on the energies of the army, even now exhausted by its unceasing exertions during the last two years, and weakened beyond all former precedent by the injudicious reductions introduced by Lord William Bentinck. The misconduct of the 2d Bengal cavalry, in the last engagement with Dost Mohammed, is not a solitary instance of the discontent which is beginning to manifest itself among the native soldiery at the unreasonable amount of service required from them; murmurs have been heard in other sepoy regiments; and, though no overt acts of mutiny have taken place, it cannot be denied or concealed, that fair grounds of complaint exist in the disproportion between the present effective strength of the army, and the new and severe duties imposed on it. The restoration, then, of the Indian military establishment to its pristine strength and efficiency, should be the first care of the Government in the present emergency; and we cannot better conclude this article than by adducing some pertinent and *practical* observations on this all-important point, which appeared in the *Naval and Military Gazette* in April last:—"It is therefore incumbent on Government to obviate such imminent danger in future, by keeping up in India an army adequate to the services required of it. Forced marches and overstrained exertions must

have an end. The European force is 10,000 men *under* its required strength, and the native army fully 80,000 under its fitting establishment. We hold some of the principal stations in India at present by a most insecure tenure, the fear of a long-subdued people, but whose numbers could easily, under a daring leader, drive us into the sea. The fact may be stated thus:—Whole countries as large as Ireland are now left with 1000 Europeans to awe them. Look over the map, and take the stations of the European regiments in proof. On the west side alone, over all Guzerat, Kattiwar, and Cutch—in fact over a space larger than France—about 1400 Europeans are distributed, the major part of which force consists of the 2d foot at Deesa, while the rest of the European force consists of artillery details at various stations. Well as we feel disposed to think of the native troops, we cannot think them *alone* able to keep India. The Court of Directors must open their purse-strings, and augment their European and native armies by at least ten European and thirty native regiments, if they wish to keep, *without revolt and attempted rebellion*, their Eastern empire. It is, in our opinion, safer to trust it to the keeping of British bayonets, than to *what philosophers call opinion*.”

IV.—AFGHANISTAN AFTER THE REVOLT.

(Published in July, 1842.)

THE events of the last six months have at length reduced the question of our Afghan policy into something like a definite form. From the day when our columns first crossed the Indus in hostile array, our government never ceased to proclaim that any permanent occupation of the country could never be for an instant contemplated; and that the sole object of the expedition was the restoration of the friendly dynasty of the Suddozyes, to whom we were bound by the ties of ancient alliance, to the

throne from which they were excluded by a usurping chief, the continuance of whose rule was incompatible equally with our interests and the welfare of his own country. On this *avowed* principle, Afghanistan was laid waste with fire and sword; the castles of its independent nobles besieged and stormed, and the chiefs themselves slaughtered while fighting in defence of their thresholds; and all this in the name of a monarch who, as was notorious to every one, was in effect as much a state prisoner of the English at Cabul as his unfortunate competitor, Dost Mohammed, was in Hindostan, and who exercised less real power beyond the precincts of his own palace than the youngest subaltern of the invading army. Herat in the meanwhile—the securing which against attack was the original pretext of the war—was almost the only corner of Afghanistan into which our intrusive arms did *not* penetrate; and its vizier, Yar Mohammed, was suffered with perfect impunity to insult and expel our envoy—to levy war against his own nominal sovereign, Shah Kamran, and to open correspondence with all the enemies of England, avowed or secret. Never, in fact, was the notable Whig process of a *non-intervention war* more completely carried out than in this instance. All this time, every rupee of revenue extracted from the country in the name of Shah Shooja cost at least ten in the collecting; and as the restored monarch was bound by treaty to keep up a subsidiary force, the expense of supporting which (as we stated last year) would have considerably exceeded the income he had ever been able, even in his former days of prosperity, to levy in his dominions, the slender resources of Afghanistan must, in the natural course of things, have been utterly exhausted in a few years—while the current outlay could only be met by incessant drafts on the Calcutta treasury, which was forced to make constant advances, and to contract heavy loans for the sake of maintaining its grasp of a territory already mortgaged far beyond the fee-simple of its value. It appears difficult to conjecture how this blissful state of things would have terminated—whether by the bankruptcy of the Indian exchequer, or by the conversion of Afghanistan into a desert—if we had been less unmolested in our philanthropic efforts to “make a solitude and call it peace,” and Shah Shooja

had been still suffered by his affectionate subjects to slumber, undisturbed by cares of state, within the screens of his well-stocked zenana. But the recent catastrophe has given us a chance of extrication from the dilemma. Of the country we are now no longer in possession, and the chequered career of our *protégé* and *ally*, Shah Shooja, has been closed (if the intelligence brought by the last mail is to be relied on) by a violent death; while his sons are utterly powerless and insignificant among the crowd of chiefs, and one at least of them (Seifdar Jung) is actually in arms against us. It now remains to be seen whether we shall consider it incumbent upon us, *for the vindication* (as the phrase is) *of our military honour*, to perpetrate a second act of violence and national injustice by reconquering Afghanistan, and holding it without disguise as a province of our empire; or whether, making the best of a bad bargain, we shall content ourselves with occupying a few posts on its frontier, and leaving its unhappy natives to recover, without foreign interference, from the dreadful state of anarchy into which our irruption has thrown them.

In the hurried and confused accounts which have been received of the opening of the bloody drama, but little mention is made of the indications which immediately preceded the outbreak; but even if we put the most favourable construction on the conduct of the officials both at Cabul and in the Bengal Presidency, their blind infatuation and want of foresight seem almost to have surpassed the bounds of belief. We have been informed, on authority which we cannot question, that as long ago as August last information had been received by the cabinet of Calcutta, of the existence of a widely-ramified conspiracy throughout Afghanistan; but so far were Lord Auckland and his advisers from deeming it necessary to reinforce the inadequate and over-worked army of occupation, that orders were actually given for the return of Sale's brigade to Hindostan; and they were accordingly on their march from Cabul to Peshawar, when they were attacked by the insurgents, and with difficulty fought their way to Jellalabad, where they have ever since been blockaded. Even the warning received in October, by Sir Alexander Burnes, from Captain Gray of the

44th (to whom the plot had been revealed by an Afghan chief),* failed to awaken so much as a sense of personal insecurity in the mind of the destined victim; and he continued to live, as before, in the midst of the native town, instead of placing himself in comparative safety within the English lines. The military commanders emulated the supineness of the diplomatists; the stores and commissariat, far from being placed in the fortified camp, or even in the Bala-Hissar † or citadel, were left in a situation which is naively described in one of the accounts, as "exposed to the first attack of an enemy!"—and all the letters written, by the mail which left Cabul only the day before the revolt, describe everything as being "quiet and peaceable" in the capital!

On the 2d of November, however (the anniversary of the final defeat of Dost Mohammed at Purwan-Durrah), the storm burst forth. At the moment of the breaking-up of the *durbar* or levee, the war-cry of Islamism was raised throughout the city, and the streets were instantly thronged with thousands of armed and furious Afghans. Burnes, cut off by his own unhappy rashness, from either defence or escape, perished at the first onset; the greater part of the ammunition and provisions, exposed as we mentioned above, fell into the hands of the assailants; and numbers of officers and men were promiscuously slaughtered, before they could succeed in rallying within the defences of the cantonments and the Bala-Hissar. The latter position was eventually abandoned—though the Shah continued to reside there, and Sir William Macnaghten, with Conolly and others, strongly recommended the concentration of the troops within its walls, rather than in the cantonments—and the whole of our

* "He (Mohammed Uzeen Khan) told me, that he was much alarmed for our safety—that the whole of Afghanistan was determined to make common cause, and to drive out or murder every *Feringhi* in the country—and that Cabul itself was ready to break out." This was forthwith communicated by letter to Sir A. Burnes, whom it reached October 15th, or *seventeen* clear days before the explosion. "The bearer brought a letter to the chief, acknowledging the receipt, but I never heard a line from Sir Alexander Burnes!" Letter of Captain Gray, *Bengal Hurkaru*, January 3, quoted in *Times*, March 10.

† This phrase implies the "*upper town or castle*," (as *bala-khanah*, *baleony*, means "the upper room,") in which the royal palace is situated, and which commands the lower and more extensive portion, divided in two by the Cabul river.

force, amounting to between 5000 and 6000 bayonets, Europeans and sepoy, with at least an equal number of camp followers, was drawn together within the entrenched camp. The assailants had at first consisted principally of the tribes near Cabul and the Kohistanis,* or inhabitants of the mountain tract immediately north of the city; but their ranks were daily swollen by the accession of numerous *Ghazis*, or religious enthusiasts, who, stimulated by the preaching of their moollahs, flocked from all parts of the country, and even (as it is reported) from Uzbek Tartary, to join the *holy war*, and aid in the extermination of the infidels. The original leader of the movement is believed to have been Zemaun Khan, a nephew of Dost Mohammed; but he was soon superseded by the arrival of the second son of Dost Mohammed, Akhbar Khan, who had escaped from detention at Bokhara. This young chief had formerly been governor of Jellalabad for his father, and had attained a high military reputation among his countrymen, by the signal victory which, in 1837, he had gained over a Sikh army at Jumrood.

Meanwhile, a rising simultaneous with that at Cabul had taken place in every part of the country; the British detached posts had been either cut off or driven in; and the four fortresses of Candahar, Ghazni, Jellalabad, and Cabul, were all that remained in the hands of the *Feringhi* invaders. An attempt to push forward a column from Candahar for the relief of Cabul failed, from the advanced period of the season and the determined opposition of the intervening tribes; and it speedily became evident that the troops in the capital, almost destitute as they were of provisions and ammunition, could not continue much longer to hold out. On the 23d of December,† accordingly, a conference for

* These Kohistanis are a branch of the Eusofzye tribe, and have long been noted as the most turbulent and bigoted of the Afghan population. On our first entrance into the country, the hill Eusofzye (Kohistanis) were among the warmest supporters of the Shah; but had been alienated by the renewal of obsolete and oppressive taxes.

† Sir W. Macnaghten, in a letter published since his death by the Hon. Mr. Erskine, states that this measure had been pressed upon him more than a fortnight previously by the military chiefs, and complains bitterly of "*the cowardice of the troops, and incapacity of the commanders,*" as having led to the triumph of "*a contemptible enemy.*" It cannot yet be ascertained how far these grave charges are capable of substantiation.

arranging terms of capitulation took place between Akhbar Khan and Sir W. Macnaghten ; but the interview was broken in upon by a band of armed fanatics, who murdered the British envoy, with one of his attendant officers, on the spot, treating his remains with every circumstance of brutal indignity. But, notwithstanding this fearful proof of the treacherous ferocity of the enemy, the necessities of the troops compelled Sir H. Pottinger (who succeeded as political chief) to attempt a renewal of the negotiation ; and on January 6th, a convention having been concluded for an unmolested passage to the frontier, the whole British force moved out of their cantonments, and took the road through the passes of the Suffeid-Koh (white mountain) towards Jellalabad—a distance of 105 miles, over tracks rising at the highest point to an elevation of 8200 feet above the level of the sea. “ At this point ” (Tazcen)—we quote the notes to Wyld’s excellent map of Afghanistan and the Punjab—“ the thermometer, on the 8th of October, was 19° at sunrise, and the hill streams were frozen over with a thin coating of ice. The road across this mountainous district is such as has seldom been crossed—the celebrated Bolan Pass is a trifle to it.”

At the time of the capitulation, the total number was about 5000 soldiers, including one Queen’s regiment (the 44th), and more than 6000 suttlers and other attendants on an eastern camp. But no sooner had the dispirited columns quitted the shelter of their lines, than they were assailed on all sides by swarms of furious Ghazis, who darted on their prey with all the eagerness of religious and national hatred. For the first two days the troops succeeded in keeping the Afghans at bay ; but the unfortunate sepoy, benumbed by the intense cold, and unable to struggle through the snow, became almost incapable of handling their arms : and as the army advanced deeper into these tremendous defiles, which had probably never before been traversed by an armed force at such a season, its demoralisation became complete. Akhbar Khan, who accompanied the march, professed his utter inability to restrain the attacks of his fanatic followers ; but proposed to insure the personal safety of the commander-in-chief, General Elphinstone, with other superior officers, and the ladies accompanying the army, if they would

place themselves in his hands as *hostages*. It is difficult to conceive that any circumstances could justify the acceptance of this proposition—it was, however, acceded to; and the fate of the main body, thus abandoned by their leaders, was not long deferred. The route became a scene of continual and almost unresisted carnage; the sepoys perished helplessly; the 44th held out for some time longer; but the soldiers, infuriated by their sufferings, at length broke out into mutiny. All semblance of order or discipline was now lost—the officers, quitting their men, attempted to push forward on horseback to Jellalabad; but *only one* (Dr. Brydon) succeeded in reaching it; the remainder fell into the hands of the Afghans, and were either slain on the spot or made prisoners. The extermination of the rest of the army appears to have been complete, only a few stragglers having been spared by the capricious mercy of individual chiefs; so that, of 11,000 who quitted Cabul on January 6, certainly not more than a few hundreds remained alive on the 14th!*

Never was the extermination of any civilised force more complete and disastrous; and never, since the disgraceful capitulations in the first American war, had so signal and calamitous a reverse befallen the British arms; further aggravated, also, by the miserable weakness and indecision of the generals, and the indiscipline of the English part of the troops; for the sepoys alone appear to have behaved steadily to the last. But whatever allowances may be made for want of caution in the first instance, and subsequent mismanagement, it is sufficiently clear that the rapidity of our original successes against a foe taken almost by surprise, had led our commanders greatly to underrate the

* It will be observed that we have refrained from imputing to Akhbar Khan personally any share either in the murder of Sir William Macnaghten, or the violation of the convention; looking upon him rather as the unwilling spectator of outrages which he had not the power of preventing. From the former charge we consider him to have been amply vindicated by the personal evidence of Captains Lawrence and Mackenzie, the two officers who escaped from the fatal interview; and during the retreat, he appears to have endeavoured as far as possible to check the assailants, (who, it should be remembered, were not of his own tribe, the Dooranias, but Ghiljis and Easafzyes, over whom he had little influence,) and to have displayed a degree of humanity very unusual in an Asiatic conqueror in the moment of victory.

prowess and military character of the Afghans; and that the descendants of the conquerors of Persia and Hindostan, when banded together by any feeling strong enough to obliterate for the time the remembrance of their eternal feuds, still maintain their hereditary claim to be held as the bravest and most warlike of the Asiatic nations. Not the least remarkable feature in this memorable insurrection is, the good faith which the conspirators observed to each other prior to the explosion. In spite of the endless dissensions which keep every tribe and every village of the Afghans almost constantly in arms against their neighbours, not one was found, among the thousands to whom the plot must have been known, who would betray his brethren of the faith for the incentive of Feringhi gold.* Deep and deadly must have been the feeling of exasperation against us which could not only prompt such a union of discordant elements, but maintain it unbroken through all the toils and losses of the subsequent warfare: for Mohammed Akhbar, as we have already observed, seems to have exercised command only over his own clansmen, the Dooraunis, while the great body of the insurgents obeyed no leader but the impulses of their own fanatic zeal. Even in this furious burst of national indignation, the republican spirit which eminently distinguishes the Afghans from all other Asiatics, was so unequivocally apparent, as forcibly to recall the language (worthy of a petty Polish noble under the old *régime*) in which the aged chief of the Meeankhail tribe replied to Mr. Elphinstone's eulogy on the blessings of a firm and established government under a powerful monarch, "We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood, but we will never be content with a master!"

The suddenness and magnitude of the disaster seem at first utterly to have paralysed the minds of the Indian authorities. Not only was no attempt made to raise the leaguer of Cabul (for which omission, indeed, the shortness of the time, and the severity of the season, was perhaps sufficient excuse), but the gallant band at Jellalabad were left throughout the winter, and

* The answer of the Khyberrees and Afreedees to the proposals recently made them for an unmolested passage through their defiles was, "This is not a war of gold, but of religion."

almost up to the date of the last advices, to maintain themselves not only unsupported by efficient aid, but even without any communication or promise of succour to encourage them in the desperate struggle for existence. An attempt was indeed made about the middle of January, by a sepoy division under Colonel Wild, to advance through the formidable Khyber Pass for their relief; but this force, though it succeeded in occupying the Ali-Musjid fort in the centre of the defiles, was not only inadequate in strength to the enterprise, but wholly unprovided with artillery—an oversight or neglect scarcely credible—and it was consequently repulsed with loss in an action at Jumrood (the scene of Akhbar Khan's victory over the Sikhs), and with difficulty made good its retreat, withdrawing the garrison from Ali-Musjid. The Sikhs, however, continued friendly, both from the inveterate hatred which they bear the Afghans, and from the necessity of our alliance to their monarch, Shere Singh, for his support on his tottering throne; and by their efficient aid in supplying stores and munitions, the corps under General Pollock was put in a condition to renew the attack on the pass: and the lately-received mail informs us that this celebrated defile has been carried in a style which goes far to retrieve the faded lustre of our arms. But during the time thus lost, the citadel of Ghazni, the first and most glorious trophy of our Afghan campaigns, had been wrested from us: the governor, Colonel Palmer,* who had only one sepoy regiment (the 27th Bengal infantry) under his orders, having been forced to capitulate by the want of provisions and water; so that Jellalabad and Candahar, separated from each other by the whole extent of the country from east to west, are the only points now remaining in our possession: and an attempt by General England to victual and relieve the latter fortress, has been frustrated by the determined resistance of the Afghans at the Kojuck Pass. Such is the state of affairs at present; but, though an advance from Jellalabad upon Cabul and Ghazni is confidently talked of, it is

* The written orders of General Elphinstone, extorted by the Afghans at the capitulation of Cabul, are alleged by Colonel Palmer in extenuation. Similar orders were sent to Jellalabad and Candahar, but disregarded by the gallant officers there in command.

obvious that some considerable time must elapse before any such movement can even be attempted, since it is admitted that the success of General Pollock at the Khyber was owing to his being "almost entirely unencumbered with baggage or stores;" and without vast trains of camels and munitions of war, it will be manifestly impossible to penetrate, in the face of an active enemy, into a rugged and mountainous country, where facilities *do not exist* for procuring supplies of any description. We can scarcely, therefore, be said to be in a condition to assume the offensive at all, and the forthcoming campaign is as yet wholly a matter of speculation.

There appears to be no doubt, however, that the present determination of the Indian cabinet is to employ all the means at their disposal for the subjugation of the Afghans; and the recent embarkation of ten thousand British troops for India, affords a hope that in future the sepoy's will be spared the brunt of a warfare for which, notwithstanding their exemplary patience and bravery, their habits and constitution utterly unfit them. In addition to the manifold inconveniences necessarily attendant on the observance of the usages of caste in a strange country, Hindoo troops have been in all ages reluctant to pass the Indus, which their superstition is taught to regard as the fated boundary of their country, as it unquestionably is the natural boundary of Indian rule; and the events of the late campaign have fatally confirmed the propriety of the title—Hindoo-Koosh, or *Hindoo-Killer*—which the vast mountain ranges about Cabul had long since acquired by the destruction of the armies sent by the emperors Akbar and Shahjehan among their snowy defiles. The operation of these causes, combined with the tragical fate of their comrades at Cabul, is said to have materially affected the spirit of the regiments on the north-west frontier, that "whole squads were going over to the Sikhs, . . . and among these many old soldiers and men who, up to that period, had been regarded as good and true *Neemukwallahs* (adherents to their salt)." But the annals of few armies, of equal numerical amount, present so unvaried a picture of loyalty, subordination, and gallantry, as has been displayed by our sepoy's while serving under a standard to which, it must be remembered, they owe no

natural allegiance; and they have an undeniable claim for consideration to be shown both to their national and religious prejudices, and to their constitutional inability to support a climate so different from that of their native country.

Before we dismiss this part of the subject, it will be necessary to make some allusion to the political arrangements which are rumoured to have taken place among the Afghans themselves since the insurrection at Cabul, as upon these must in some degree depend the measures to be taken for the future settlement of the country, in the event of its again falling into our power. But notwithstanding the length of time since the revolt, the accounts which have been received on this point are so confused, and so much at variance one with another, that scarcely any thing can be ascertained with certainty. In the consternation of the first surprise, Shah Shooja was almost universally denounced as the prime mover and instigator of the massacre of the allies who had placed him on the throne; and his continuing to reside unharmed in the Bala-Hissar during the siege and after the capitulation, would certainly appear to afford strong *prima facie* evidence of his complicity with the conspirators. But other statements seem to prove that his apparent subservience to the insurgents was prompted only by a regard for his own safety; and the Calcutta papers mention that he had even contrived to forward a letter to the Governor-general, exculpating himself from the charge of treachery, and bitterly inveighing against the late envoy as having brought on the catastrophe by his injudicious conduct. It does not appear very clearly in whom the actual authority of Cabul is at present vested. Akhbar Khan's authority seems to be limited to the military command; and though the names of various chiefs are mentioned as assuming the temporary direction of affairs, no one appears to have acquired a sufficiently decided predominance to justify his being regarded as the supreme leader.* Nor do

* Nawab Jubbar Khan, eldest brother of Dost Mohammed, is said to be the only person who can maintain order and concord among those fiery chiefs, all of whom respect his single-hearted and venerable character; but he takes no part in the direction of affairs. This aged chief arrived at Ghazni, during its occupation by the British, with offers of submission from Dost Mohammed to Shah Shooja,

we conceive that the death of Shah Shooja will materially lessen the diplomatic difficulties of our situation; for if, on the one hand, it saves us the trouble of punishing him should the charge of foul play be brought home to him, it deprives us, on the other (according to any but Asiatic rules of equity), of our only colourable pretext for continuing to interfere in the affairs of the country: since, had our ex-ally not existed in 1839, it is difficult to conjecture what grounds we could have put forward to justify our aggression.

Hitherto we have considered the subject of the late reverses only in its military point of view, and with reference to our future proceedings in Afghanistan itself. But severe as is the amount of actual loss which has been sustained, and grievous as are the sacrifices by which it may be necessary to retrieve it, the political results of these disasters are to be looked for, not so much on the further side of the Indus, as in the train of feeling which may be kindled by this event among the native population of India. "The people of Central Asia," to quote the language of an eloquent writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (Oct. 1841, article on Warren Hastings), "had always been to the inhabitants of India, what the warriors of the German forests were to the subjects of the decaying monarchy of Rome. During the last ten centuries, a succession of invaders descended from the west on Hindostan—and it had always been the practice of the emperors to recruit their army from the hardy and valiant race from which their own illustrious house sprung." Afghanistan, in fact, may be regarded as the fatherland of the Moslems of India, a great proportion of whom at this day, including all the Patans and Rohillas, are of nearly pure Afghan blood, and pride themselves on tracing their descent from the warlike and independent tribes beyond the Indus; towards whom, since the fall

expressive of his willingness to cede to him all right to the city of Cabul, on condition that he should not be compelled to remain in a British province under surveillance, maintaining at the same time his indefeasible right to the office of vizier, as head of the Barukzyes. It being impossible to entertain such a proposition, the old man, in his bluntness, expressed great indignation at the rejection of what he considered as but just and righteous."—(Sir K. Jackson's Views in Afghanistan) We must confess ourselves far from disinclined to coincide in the view of the subject as taken by the honest old Afghan.

of the House of Timur, they have more than once turned their eyes for aid to support the waning ascendancy of Islam. When the Mahrattas under the Bhow occupied Delhi in 1760, and openly avowed their intention of terminating the Moslem rule in India by proclaiming the son of the Peishwa as emperor, the Mohammedan chiefs invoked in their extremity the aid of Ahmed Shah, the founder of the Doorauni dynasty, whose power had been manifested to them by the sack of Delhi a few years previously: and the decisive victory of Paniput, where near 200,000 Mahrattas fell in the battle and the pursuit, proved that their reliance on Afghan prowess was well founded. More than thirty years later, the same spirit was again strongly shown during the fruitless attempts of Shah Zemaun (elder brother of Shah Shooja) to regain the influence in Hindostan which had been held by his grandfather Ahmed. In the words of Mount-stuart Elphinstone (than whom no man ever better knew the sentiments of the natives of India), "every Mussulman, even to the remotest regions of the Dekkan, waited in anxious expectation for the advance of the champion of Islam,"—and our newly-acquired empire would have been seriously endangered, if he had gained a footing beyond the Sutlej so as to rally round his standards the Moslems of the Upper Provinces, while Tippoo Sultan, with whom he was in active communication, made head against us in the south. His efforts, it is true, were constantly frustrated by the distracted state of his own dominions; but the peril was still considered sufficient to justify the sending a mission to Persia in 1799, "the principal object of which was," by creating a diversion, "to secure a three years' suspension of the threatened attack of Shah Zemaun."

It cannot, therefore, reasonably be expected that the recent events in Afghanistan should be viewed with indifference by any class of our Indian subjects, and least of all by the Moslem part of the population. It is worse than idle to allege, as is too much the fashion among newspaper politicians of the present day, that the long continuance of our sway, with the *equity of our internal administration*, has extinguished these aspirations for religious and national independence, and reconciled the natives of India to the yoke of the stranger. So far is this favourite

delusion from having any foundation in fact, that there is not a single district of our immense territory, except perhaps some of the southern provinces of the Calcutta presidency, which would not rise in instant revolt in the event of our military force being so weakened as to become inadequate for their coercion: and had any such reverse as the disaster of Cabul occurred *within the boundaries of India*, the words of Bishop Heber (to which we referred in January 1839) would have been at once fulfilled by the universal insurrection of every man who possessed a sword and a horse. The disaffection of the Mahratta and Rajpoot States, indeed, arises simply from the desire of shaking off our supremacy at any rate; but the sympathy of the Moslems is more directly enlisted in favour of the Afghans by community of blood and faith, and has been, all along, unequivocally manifested. No sooner was the rupture declared between the chiefs of Cabul and the British government, than the native Moham-medan press teemed with invectives against the latter, couched in terms which in Europe would be held as treasonable, and with direct appeals to our soldiery to desert their colours in the approaching contest. In November 1838, the *Jami-Jehan-Numah*, a journal in the Persian language, extensively circulated among the natives in Central India, announced to its readers "that fully four *lakhs*" (400,000!) "of Cabul Afghans had assembled under the standard of the Prophet, resolved to combat to the utmost in behalf of the faith against the infidels who were preparing to invade their territory;" following up this veracious intelligence by an exhortation, addressed to the Moslem sepoys, "if it should be their destiny to be brought in contact with them, to pay no regard to the *Feringhi* salt which they had eaten, but to join the glorious warriors of Islam in the day of battle!" Another periodical of the same class (the *Ain-Iskender*, printed in Calcutta), is said to have had, some years ago, a large sale in Persia, and to have been mainly instrumental, by its inflammatory tirades, in filling the head of the Shah with the wild schemes of Indian conquest, which the repulse before Herat so effectually extinguished. Even while the Persian army lay before that fortress, its columns continued to be filled with triumphant predictions of their speedy advance upon the Punjab

and Delhi; while the impunity with which these attacks were suffered to pass, was viewed by the natives as conclusive evidence of the weakness and trepidation of the government. The natural consequence was a whole cluster of abortive conspiracies, by Hindoos as well as Moslems, in Poonah and various parts of the Dekkan, besides the grand plot which led to the dethronement of the Rajah of Sattarah, whose scheme was to effect a diversion, by means of 15,000 Portuguese from Goa (!), in favour of the great combined invasion of Russians, Persians, and Afghans, which he confidently expected was about to burst on the north-west frontier. Such has been our reward for communicating to our Indian subjects the art of printing; and our efforts to instruct them in English literature (it may be remarked *par parenthèse*) have been equally well repaid; the intercepted despatches at Cabul having been translated to the Afghans by runaway students from the Delhi College!

This constantly smouldering spirit of disaffection in the Moslems, has hitherto attracted comparatively little notice from writers on India; though such a feeling in this class of our subjects, from their natural tendency to seek support among their co-religionists throughout Asia, is far more dangerous than it would be among the Hindoos, whose faith and sympathies are all confined within the boundaries of their own country. The little attention which this important point has met with, is probably owing to the fact of our final contests for universal empire in India having been with the Mahrattas and other Hindoo powers, and not with the Mohammedan princes, whose subjugation was apparently completed by the fall of their great champion Tippoo Sultan; it is to the Bengal provinces, moreover, where the evil is less apparent than in the southern presidencies, that the speculations of English authors and travellers have been principally directed. In Northern India, which is almost entirely under our direct dominion, there are no points of reunion for the Moslem interest, except the utterly helpless pageant-courts of Lucknow and Delhi; "the *sultanat*" (to use their own words) "has departed from the Faithful," and their *national* existence may be considered as annihilated. But even here the spark, on more than one occasion, has been nearly kindled

into flame ; and the furious outbreak of the Rohillas in 1816, occasioned by the misconduct of a local officer at Bareilly, is yet far from forgotten in the upper provinces. The green flag of the Prophet was hoisted—the moollahs preached the *holy war*—and the zeal and determination with which this warlike race obeyed the call, showed them to have degenerated in neither point from their fathers, who, under the leadership of Hafiz-Remut Khan, opposed the mercenary battalions of Hastings, and the armies of his ally the Nawab-Vizier, on the bloody field of Rampoor. By prompt military interference, and at the expense of considerable bloodshed, the insurrectionary movement was indeed crushed in the outset, and prevented from spreading through the surrounding districts ; but it was abundantly shown how easily the martial fanaticism of the Moslems might yet be raised against the hated yoke of the *Kafirs* !

But the focus of Mohammedan turbulence in the present day, should any commotion arise, would more probably be found in the Dekkan and the Hyderabad territories, where the Moslems have in all ages been distinguished by intolerance and bigotry, and where they enjoy a greater share of political freedom than their brethren in Northern India. The Nizam (as the sovereign of Hyderabad is popularly denominated, from the name of his great ancestor Nizam-al-Mulk) is the oldest ally of the British power in India ; and he and his predecessors have all along maintained exemplary good faith in their relations with our government. His independence, however, has of late years become little more than nominal ; he is bound by treaty to maintain a large subsidiary force, which, though raised in his name, and paid from his revenues, is officered and disciplined by Europeans, and forms in effect part of the Company's army ; while the measures of his civil government are virtually under the control of the resident at Hyderabad. During the reign of the present Nizam, who is an indolent and voluptuous prince, and pays little attention to affairs of state, this interference in the internal administration has been carried (as it is said) to a vexatious and unnecessary extent, so as to excite great discontent among the haughty nobles of the court, and the petty nawabs who hold their states as vassals of the Hyder-

abad monarchy. Most of these chiefs, in addition to their native followers, have in their service considerable numbers of foreign armed retainers, sometimes Patans and Rohillas from Northern India, but more frequently Arabs from the Muscat territories, who, from their ferocious bravery, are held in the highest estimation throughout India as mercenaries, and receive pay and allowances far higher than those assigned to the native soldiery. Not fewer than 15,000 of these fierce *condottieri* were entertained, when the Afghan war broke out, in the Hyderabad state and its dependencies; and many of these professed the tenets of the Wahhabis, or Moslem puritans, whose sect was nearly suppressed in Arabia, some twenty years since, by the sword of the pasha of Egypt. The introduction of these novel doctrines, which had hitherto been unknown in India, added to the ferment of the public mind; even in the city of Madras, the uncompromising tenets of these fierce enthusiasts found numerous followers; and the government deemed it necessary to deport to Calcutta some of the most active of their *dhuis*, or teachers, who were detected in the attempt to seduce from their allegiance the Moslem sepoys in the Madras regiments. But in the semi-independent states of the Nizam the evil was less easily checked; the passions of the Moslems were stimulated by the diffusion of seditious papers, upbraiding them with their degenerate submission to Feringhi ascendancy;* and fresh converts were daily attracted by the vehement harangues of the new sectaries, who avowed their aim of

* Some idea may be formed of the terms and spirit of these proclamations from the following extracts, taken from a paper seized at the capture of Kurnool, in October, 1839. "The sins of him who dies for the faith are remitted by God, and he enters Paradise pure and spotless. . . . If a single Moslem opposes ten thousands in battle, and is victorious, he becomes a *Ghazi* (champion of the faith):—should he be slain, he is a *shahid* (martyr), and will enter into glory. By the death of one man, the glorified *shahid* Tippoo Sultan, the Moslems fell into their present state of degradation and subjection to the infidels; and you, of the present day, though you are the heirs of the prophets and the sons of the men who fought for Islam, have deserted your religion, and obey the infidel Nazarenes! But you will speedily hear the cry of *Deen! Deen!* (the faith)—then shake off all negligence and fear from your hearts; repeat the *Kulma* and the *Fatah* (Mohammedan formula of faith), and join the army of the true believers who have come for the battle!"

restoring Islam to its ancient purity and pre-eminence. The movement party at length found a leader in the Nawab Mubariz-ed-dowlah (brother of the reigning Nizam), a prince of remarkable personal advantages and high popularity, who openly embraced the Wahhabi creed, and made his palace in Hyderabad the head-quarters of their faction; while at the same time it became known that vast quantities of artillery and military stores were being collected by the Nawab of Kurnool, a petty Patan ruler, whose country adjoined that of the Nizam. The British government now felt itself compelled to interfere. In June, 1839, Mubariz-ed-dowlah was arrested in pursuance of a requisition from the resident, and conveyed as a state prisoner to the fort of Golconda, where he still remains; and in October of the same year, the Nawab of Kurnool was *mediatized* (to borrow a phrase from the Germanic empire), and his district absorbed in the dominions of the Company.* The discoveries made at the occupation of this place were sufficiently calculated to open the eyes of the government to the nature and extent of the plot which had been concocted. An enormous number of newly-cast guns, piles of shot, shells, and missiles of extraordinary and novel fashions, were found concealed in every part of the palace, gardens, and town, in such profusion as could scarcely be explained except by supposing it to be the central depôt of some widely-ramified conspiracy; and though it does not appear that any direct correspondence was proved to have existed between the malecontents at Kurnool and the Wahhabi faction at Hyderabad, it was clear that their sentiments and objects, whether devised in concert or not, were essentially the same.

The transactions of which we have now endeavoured to show the true tendency and importance, were doubtless duly reported in the English newspapers at the time, but passed wholly unheeded by the *British public*, who saw in the dispossession of a refractory nawab, and the imprisonment of a native prince, nothing more than the ordinary and constitutional exercise of

* He was murdered (June, 1840) at Trichinopoly, whither he had been sent under surveillance, by one of his own Moslem attendants, who had conceived, from his master's familiar intercourse with the English residents, that he meditated embracing Christianity!

the authority legitimately vested in the rulers of India. But it is impossible to say what might have been the consequences of this abortive movement, had any grounds of private discontent combined with the efforts of the Wahhabi propagandists to shake the fidelity of the sepoy. The *materiel* of the Madras army (unlike that of Bengal, which consists in a great measure of Brahmins and other high-caste Hindoos) is drawn principally from the lower grades of Moslems; and the famous mutiny of Vellore in July 1806, which, both for its suddenness and secrecy, and for the merciless spirit displayed by the revolvers, bore no inconsiderable similitude to the recent outbreak at Cabul, affords fatal evidence of the ease with which their passions may be goaded to acts of violence. It would naturally be supposed that, particularly at such a crisis as the present, the government would avoid exciting the angry feelings of a force thus constituted, by any tampering with their pay; yet such a reduction has recently been attempted, and the consequences have been such as might have been anticipated.

From the first establishment of the native army in India it has been customary, instead of organising a regular commissariat service for the maintenance of the troops in the field, to issue to the soldier an extra pecuniary allowance for the purchase of provisions, under the title of *Batta*—a Hindostani phrase, properly implying the rate of exchange between coins bearing the same name but from different mints. This ordinary allowance was termed *half batta*—but when the troops were called on for field service, or stationed beyond the boundaries of their own presidency, a further advance was made, which was denominated *full batta*. This latter regulation particularly affected the Madras troops, from the continual calls made on them for service in the Nagpoor and Hyderabad territories, &c., and until very recently no attempt was made to alter it. But in the latter part of 1841, the fort of Ascerghur, which (though in the Bombay territory) is garrisoned by Madras troops, was reduced from a *full* to a *half batta* station by a government order; but the regiment stationed there (the 52d Madras infantry) refused, on the next pay-day, to receive their money without full batta, and were not without difficulty reduced to submission by the

efforts of the European officers. The government, however, persevered in the plan of reduction, which was next put in force (in February of the present year) at the important stations of Jaulnah and Secunderabad, in the Nizam territories, where, in addition to the proposed diminution of batta, the pay of the soldier was further curtailed by being issued in the depreciated coinage of Hyderabad.* Secunderabad is one of the most extensive cantonments of the Madras army, and derives additional importance from its close vicinity to Hyderabad, the capital city of the Nizam, and filled (as we have already mentioned) with a disaffected Moslem population. The troops followed the example of their comrades at Aseerghur—not less than four regiments (7th, 32d, and 80th infantry, and 4th light cavalry) rejected their pay unless accompanied by full batta, and broke out into open mutiny: and though the first-named corps, after some demur, returned to their duty, the others remained refractory till surrounded by a superior force of Europeans and artillery, when several hundreds were disarmed and made prisoners; and have since been either dismissed the service, or draughted into other regiments, as if to disseminate as widely as possible the example of disaffection. At present (as we are assured by the latest accounts), all symptoms of insubordination have disappeared; and as the *batta* grievance has been redressed by order of Lord Ellenborough, this may be really the case. Still it must be admitted as singularly fortunate, that this disturbance did not take place at the time when the fidelity of the soldiers was assailed by the machinations of Mubariz-ed-dowlah and his Wahhabi confederates; and even now, with the examples of the insurrection at Cabul and the mutiny at Vellore before our eyes, who can say how far this seeming security, in the critical state of our affairs in other quarters, is to be depended upon?

Such, up to the present time, have been the visible results of Whig domestic government in India, and of that ever-memor-

* The troops, officers and men, had always been paid, when quartered in the Nizam's dominions, at the rate of 111 Hyderabad for 100 Company's rupees, the real equivalent being 120 for 100; but this has been redressed since the outbreak at Secunderabad.

able stroke of Whig policy by which (as we were assured two years ago) our Anglo-Indian empire had been established for ever on an immovable basis ; what the ultimate consequences of both may be, is as yet hidden in the womb of time. It had been long since foretold by him whose lightest word was never spoken in vain, at once the most illustrious of our warriors and most sagacious of our statesmen, that " it would not be till Lord Auckland's policy had reached the zenith of apparent success, that its difficulties would begin to develop themselves," and fatally has the prediction been verified. But if the *ikbal*, or good fortune, which is proverbially believed in the East to attend on all the operations of the Company, has deserted them in their utmost need in the passes of Cabul, it must be allowed that the original instigators of, and agents, in the Afghan war (with the single exception of the unfortunate Macnaghten), have most signally reaped the benefits of its influence. Titles, pensions, and promotions, have been heaped upon them with an unexampled profusion, which presents a strange contrast with the impeachment of Hastings, and the general neglect experienced by those who laid, in past days, the foundations of our Asiatic rule ; and before their short-lived laurels have had time to wither, they have been recalled to the tranquil enjoyment of their honours in England, leaving the rectification of their errors to their successors. Even to the last moment of his stay in India, the late viceroy was fostered by the breath of popular favour ; and the thunder of the cannon which announced the arrival of Lord Ellenborough, was mingled with the acclamations which rang through the Town Hall of Calcutta from those assembled to do honour to the ruler whom he came to succeed. With the tributes of respect thus tendered we have no fault to find, if considered as on the principle of " speed the parting guest," or with reference to the amiable character and high private worth of the individual ; but the laudatory allusions to his trans-Indian policy, with which the Calcutta addresses were filled, were equally opposed to fact and to good taste ; and must (we think) have been felt by the object of them as a painful and humiliating mockery. When Lord Auckland assumed the reigns of government in 1836, the external relations of our

Eastern empire were peaceful, the finances prosperous, and the army, notwithstanding the injudicious reductions of Lord William Bentinck, amply sufficient for any duty required within our own frontier; but a far different prospect awaits his successor. A treasury drained to the last rupee—an army defeated in one quarter, and disaffected in another—an almost hopelessly-involved foreign policy—with a war of extermination in Afghanistan—a seemingly interminable bucanier warfare in China, and the probability of hostilities with Burmah and Nepaul—such is the frightful catalogue of difficulties with which the new governor-general is called upon at once to grapple!

But Lord Ellenborough approaches the task with far different qualifications to several of his immediate predecessors, who seem to have assumed the viceregal sceptre of India as a dignified and lucrative sinecure; for the creditable fulfilment of the duties of which little exertion would be required, and still less any previous knowledge of the institutions and political condition of the countries they were thus called to govern. His services as President of the Board of Control in 1828, and more recently (in 1840) as chairman of the Lords' Committee on East Indian produce, bear ample and honourable evidence of the extent to which his researches have been carried in the commercial and agricultural resources of our Asiatic territories, and afford a hope that this knowledge may, when the present storm has passed, be brought efficiently to bear on the development of these too long neglected natural riches. The trade of India has now been open seven years, but neither the parliament nor the public have as yet shown themselves adequately aware of its true value and importance. While the possession of the Indus ought to secure to us the whole commerce of Central Asia,* the tea of Assam, the sugar of Hindostan, and the cotton recently introduced from America and Egypt, might be culti-

* The exertions of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce have already worked wonders in this quarter—depôts have been established at various points on the Indus; and the port of Sonmceani on the Belooch coast, west on the mouth of that river, is fast becoming the emporium of a wool trade, the staple of which is supplied by the innumerable flocks grazing on these elevated table lands. A town in the interior called Wudd (145 miles from Khelat and 152 from Sonmceani) is the inland mart for this new trade.

vated so as eventually both to render us independent of our now precarious trade with China, and to secure our supplies of cotton in the event of a rupture of our hollow friendship with America.

For the first time during many years, the care of these mighty interests has devolved upon one who is endowed not only with zeal and good-will, but with that previous acquaintance with India, its resources, and its customs, the want of which has so lamentably marred the well-meant endeavours of more than one of his predecessors. Of his foreign policy, hampered as it must necessarily be at the outset by the task of unravelling the tangled web which has been bequeathed to him, little can at present be said:—but he has set out with the commander-in-chief for the north-western provinces, in order to be nearer the scene of action—a journey, we trust, to be attended with different results to the memorable progress of Lord Auckland to the same quarter;—and his domestic administration has been commenced auspiciously, by an act of justice to the Madras scpoys in the restoration of the disputed *batta*. But on the course of Lord Ellenborough's government will mainly depend the question of the future stability, or gradual decline, of our Anglo-Indian empire; for, though we are not among those who hold the opinion said to have been expressed by a late governor of one of the presidencies (Sir Charles Metcalfe), that "he hardly felt secure, on retiring to rest for the night, that the whole fabric might not have vanished into thin air before the morning,"—it cannot be denied that the prestige of unerring wisdom and invincible good fortune, which powerfully conduced to the maintenance of our authority, has sustained a tremendous shock from the late occurrences beyond the Indus. The French press already, in exulting anticipation, has ventured to indicate the period of its extinction:—England" (says the *Siècle*) "is rich and energetic: she may re-establish her dominion in India for some time longer; but the term of her Indian empire is marked: it will conclude before the quarter of a century." Less than the prescribed period would probably have sufficed, under a continuance of the policy lately pursued, for the accomplishment of this prophecy; but we have good hope that the evil

days have now passed away : and if Lord Ellenborough, at the conclusion of his viceroyalty, has only so far succeeded as to restore our foreign and domestic relations to the same state in which they stood ten years since, he will merit to be handed down to posterity by the side of Clive and Hastings as the second founder of our Eastern empire.

V.—THE EVACUATION OF AFGHANISTAN.

(Published in February, 1813.)

SINCE the day when Lord Auckland, by his famous proclamation in October, 1838, "directed the assemblage of a British force for service across the Indus," we have never ceased to denounce the invasion and continued occupation of Afghanistan as equally unjust and impolitic—unjust, as directed against a people whose conduct had afforded us no legitimate grounds of hostility, and against a ruler whose only offence was, that he had accepted* the proffer from another quarter of that support and alliance which we had denied to his earnest entreaty ;—and impolitic, as tending not only to plunge us into an endless succession of ruinous and unprofitable warfare, but to rouse against us an implacable spirit of enmity, in a nation which had hitherto shown every disposition to cultivate amicable relations with our Anglo-Indian government. In all points, our anticipations have been fatally verified. After more than two years consumed in unavailing efforts to complete the reduction of the country, our army of occupation was at last overwhelmed by the universal and irresistible outbreak of an indignant and fanatic population ; and the restored monarch, Shah-Shooja, ("whose popularity throughout Afghanistan had been proved to the Governor-general by the strong and unanimous testimony of the best

* It now seems even doubtful whether the famous letter of Dost Mohammed to the Emperor of Russia, which constituted the *gravamen* of the charge against him, was ever really written, or at least with his concurrence.—*Vide* "Report of the Colonial Society on the Afghan War," p. 35.

authorities,") perished, as soon as he lost the protection of foreign bayonets, by the hands of his outraged countrymen.*

The tottering and unsubstantial phantom of a *Doorauni kingdom* vanished at once and for ever; and the only remaining alternative was (as we stated the case last July) "either to perpetrate a second act of violence and national injustice, by reconquering Afghanistan *for the vindication* (as the phrase is) *of our military honour*, and holding it without disguise as a province of our empire; or to make the best of a bad bargain, by contenting ourselves with the occupation of a few posts on the frontier, and leaving the unhappy natives to recover, without foreign interference, from the dreadful state of anarchy into which our irruption has thrown them." Fortunately for British interests in the East, the latter course has been adopted. After a succession of brilliant military triumphs, which, in the words of Lord Ellenborough's recent proclamation, "have, in one short campaign, avenged our late disasters upon every scene of past misfortune," the evacuation of the country has been directed—not, however, before a fortunate chance had procured the liberation of *all* the prisoners who had fallen into the power of the Afghans in January last; and ere this time, we trust, not a single British regiment remains on the blood-stained soil of Afghanistan.

The proclamation above referred to † (which we have given at length at the conclusion of this article), announcing these events, and defining the line of policy in future to be pursued by the

* The particulars of Shah Shooja's fate, which were unknown when we last referred to the subject, have been since ascertained. After the retreat of the English from Cabul, he remained for some time secluded in the Bala-Hissar, observing great caution in his intercourse with the insurgent leaders; but he was at length prevailed upon, by assurances of loyalty and fidelity (about the middle of April), to quit the fortress, in order to head an army against Jellalabad. He had only proceeded, however, a short distance from the city, when his litter was fired upon by a party of musketeers placed in ambush by a Doorauni chief named Shooja-ed-Dowlah; and the king was shot dead on the spot. Such was the ultimate fate of a prince, the vicissitudes of whose life almost exceed the fictions of romance, and who possessed talents sufficient, in more tranquil times, to have given *éclat* to his reign. During his exile at Loodiana, he composed in Persian a curious narrative of his past adventures, a version of part of which appears in the 30th volume of the *Asiatic Journal*.

† It is singular that this proclamation was issued on the fourth anniversary of Lord Auckland's "Declaration" of Oct. 1, 1838; and from the same place, Simla.

Anglo-Indian government, is in all respects a remarkable document. As a specimen of frankness and plain-speaking, it stands unique in the history of diplomacy; and, accordingly, both its matter and its manner have been made the subjects of unqualified censure by those scribes of the opposition press who, "content to dwell in forms for ever," have accustomed themselves to regard the mystified protocols of Lord Palmerston as the models of official style. The *Morning Chronicle*, with amusing ignorance of the state of the public mind in India, condemns the governor-general for allowing it to become known to the natives, that the abandonment of Afghanistan was in consequence of a change of policy! conceiving, we suppose, that our Indian subjects would otherwise have believed the Cabul disasters to have formed part of the original plan of the war, and to have veiled some purpose of inscrutable wisdom; while the *Globe* (December 3), after a reluctant admission that "the policy itself of evacuating the country *may be wise*," would fain deprive Lord Ellenborough of the credit of having originated this decisive step, by an assertion, that "we have discovered no proof that a permanent possession of the country beyond the Indus was contemplated by his predecessor." It would certainly have been somewhat premature in Lord Auckland to have announced his ultimate intentions on this point while the country in question was as yet but imperfectly subjugated, or when our troops were subsequently almost driven out of it; but the views of the then home government, from which it is to be presumed that Lord Auckland received his instructions, were pretty clearly revealed in the House of Commons on the 10th of August last, by one whose authority the *Globe*, at least, will scarcely dispute—by Lord Palmerston himself. To prevent the possibility of misconstruction, we quote the words attributed to the late Foreign Secretary. After drawing the somewhat unwarrantable inference from Sir Robert Peel's statement, that "no immediate withdrawal of our troops from Candahar and Jellalabad was contemplated"—that an order had at one time been given for the abandonment of Afghanistan, he proceeds—"I do trust that her Majesty's government will not carry into effect, either immediately or at *any* future time, the arrangement thus contemplated. It was all very well when

we were in power, and it was suited to party purposes, to run down anything we had done, and to represent as valueless any acquisition on which we may have prided ourselves—it was all very well to raise an outcry against the Afghan expedition, and to undervalue the great advantages which the possession of the country was calculated to afford us; but I trust the government will rise above any consideration of that sort, and that they will give the matter their fair, dispassionate, and deliberate consideration. I must say, I never was more convinced of anything in the whole course of my life—and I may be believed when I speak my earnest conviction—that the most important interests of this country, both commercial and political, would be sacrificed, if we were to sacrifice the military possession of the country of Eastern Afghanistan.” Is it in the power of words to convey a clearer admission, that the pledge embodied in Lord Auckland’s manifesto—“to withdraw the British army as soon as the independence and integrity of Afghanistan should be secured by the establishment of the Shah”—was, in fact, mere moonshine; and the real object of the expedition was the conquest of a country advantageously situated for the defence of our Indian frontier against (as it now appears) an imaginary invader! Thus Napoleon, in December, 1810, alleged “the necessity, in consequence of the new order of things which has arisen, of new guarantees for the security of my empire,” as a pretext for that wholesale measure of territorial spoliation in Northern Germany, which, from the umbrage it gave Russia, proved ultimately the cause of his downfall; but it was reserved for us of the present day to hear a *British* minister avow and justify a violent and perfidious usurpation, on the plea of political expediency. It must indeed be admitted that, in the early stages of the war, the utter iniquity of the measure met with but faint reprobation from any party in the state: the nation, dazzled by the long-disused splendours of military glory, was willing, without any very close inquiry, to take upon trust all the assertions so confidently put forth on the popularity of Shah Shooja, the hostile machinations of Dost Mohammed, and the philanthropic and disinterested wishes of the Indian government for (to quote a notable phrase to which we have previously referred) “the

re-construction of the social edifice" in Afghanistan. But now that all these subterfuges, flimsy as they were at best, have been utterly dissipated by this undisguised declaration of Lord Palmerston, that the real object of the war was to seize and hold the country on our own account, the attempt of the *Globe* to claim for Lord Auckland the credit of having from the first contemplated a measure thus vehemently protested against and disclaimed by the late official leader of his party, is rather too barefaced to be passed over without comment.

Without, however, occupying ourselves further in combating the attacks of the Whig press on this proclamation, which may very well be left to stand on its own merits, we now proceed to recapitulate the course of the events which have, in a few months, so completely changed the aspect of affairs beyond the Indus. When we took leave, in July last, of the subject of the Afghan campaign, we left General Pollock, with the force which had made its way through the Khyber Pass, still stationary at Jellalabad, for want (as it was said) of camels and other means of transport; while General Nott, at Candahar, not only held his ground, but victoriously repulsed, in the open field, the Afghan *insurgents* (as it is the fashion to call them), who were headed by the prince Seifdar Jung, son of Shah Shooja! and General England, after his repulse on the 28th of March at the Kojuck Pass, remained motionless at Quettah. The latter officer (in consequence, as it is said, of peremptory orders from General Nott to meet him on a given day at the further side of the Pass) was the first to resume active operations; and on the 28th of April the works at Hykulzie in the Kojuck, which had been unaccountably represented on the former occasion as most formidable defences, were carried without loss or difficulty, and the force continued its march uninterrupted to Candahar. The fort of Khelat-i-Ghilji, lying about half way between Candahar and Ghazni, was at the same time gallantly and successfully defended by a handful of Europeans and sepoys, till relieved by the advance of a division from Candahar, which brought off the garrison, and razed the fortifications of the place. Girishk, the hereditary stronghold of the Barukzye chiefs, about eighty miles west of Candahar, was also dismantled and abandoned; and all

the troops in Western Afghanistan were thus concentrated under the immediate command of General Nott, whose success in every encounter with the Afghans continued to be so decisive, that all armed opposition disappeared from the neighbourhood of Candahar; and the prince Seifdar Jung, despairing of the cause, of which he had perhaps been from the first not a very willing supporter, came in and made his submission to the British commander.

During the progress of these triumphant operations in Western Afghanistan, General Pollock still lay inactive at Jellalabad; and some abortive attempts were made to negotiate with the dominant party at Cabul for the release of the prisoners taken the preceding winter. Since the death of Shah Shooja, the throne had been nominally filled by his third son, Futteh Jung, the only one of the princes who was on the spot; but all the real power was vested, with the rank of vizier, in the hands of Akhbar Khan, who had not only possessed himself of the Bala-Hissar and the treasure of the late king, but had succeeded in reuniting the forces of the Afghan league, by a reconciliation with Ameen-ullah Khan,* the original leader of the outbreak, with whom he had formerly been at variance. All efforts, however, to procure the liberation of the captives, on any other condition than the liberation of Dost Mohammed and the evacuation of Afghanistan by the English (as hostages for which they had originally been given), proved fruitless; and at length, after more than four months' delay, during which several sharp affairs had taken place with advanced bodies of the Afghans, General Pollock moved forward with his whole force, on the 20th of August, against Cabul. This city had again in the meantime become a scene of tumult and disorder—the Kizilbashes, or Persian

* It was this chief whose betrayal or destruction Sir William M'Naghten is accused, on the authority of General Elphinstone's correspondence, of having meditated, on the occasion when he met with his own fate. We hope for the honour of the English name, that the memory of the late Resident at Cabul may be cleared from this heavy imputation; but he certainly cannot be acquitted of having, by his wilful blindness and self-sufficiency, contributed to precipitate the catastrophe to which he himself fell a victim. In proof of this assertion, it is sufficient to refer to the tenor of his remarks on the letter addressed to him by Sir A. Burnes on the affairs of Cabul, August 7, 1840, which appeared some time since in the *Bombay Times*, and afterwards in the *Asiatic Journal* for October and November, 1842.

inhabitants, as well as many of the native chiefs, resisting the exactions of Akhbar Khan; who, at last, irritated by the opposition to his measures, imprisoned the titular shah, Futteh Jung, in the Bala-Hissar, whence he succeeded after a time in escaping, and made his appearance, in miserable plight (Sept. 1), at the British head-quarters at Futtehabad, between Jellalabad and Gundamuck. The advance of the army was constantly opposed by detached bodies of the enemy, and several spirited skirmishes took place; till, on the 13th of September, the main Afghan force, to the number of 16,000 men, under Akhbar Khan and other leaders, was descried on the heights near Tazeen (where the slaughter of our troops had taken place in January), at the entrance of the formidable defiles called the Huft-Kothul, or Seven Passes. It is admitted on all hands that in this last struggle (as they believed, for independence), the Afghans fought with most distinguished gallantry, frequently charging sword in hand upon the bayonets; but their irregular valour eventually gave way before the discipline of their opponents, and a total rout took place. The chiefs fled in various directions, "abandoning Cabul to the *avengers of British wrongs*," who entered the city in triumph on the 15th, and hoisted the British colours on the Bala-Hissar. The principal point now remaining to be effected was the rescue of the prisoners whom Akhbar Khan had carried off with him in his flight, with the intention, as was rumoured, of transporting them into Turkestan; but from this peril they were fortunately delivered by the venality of the chief to whose care they had been temporarily intrusted; and on the 21st they all reached the camp in safety, with the exception of Captain Bygrave, who was also liberated, a few days later, by the voluntary act of Akhbar himself.*

General Nott, meanwhile, in pursuance of his secret orders from the Supreme Government, had been making preparations

* The kindness and humanity which these unfortunate *detenus* experienced from first to last at the hands of Akhbar, reflect the highest honour on the character of this chief, whom it has been the fashion to hold up to execration as a monster of perfidy and cruelty. As a contrast to this conduct of the Afghan *barbarians*, it is worth while to refer to Colonel Lindsay's narrative of his captivity in the dungeons of Hyder and Tippoo, which has recently appeared in the *Asiatic Journal*, September, December, 1842.

for abandoning Candahar; and on the 7th and 8th of August, the city was evacuated, both by his corps and by the division of General England—the Afghan prince, Seifdar Jung, being left in possession of the place. The routes of the two commanders were now separated. General England, with an immense train of luggage, stores, &c., directed his march through the Kojuck Pass to Quettah, which he reached with little opposition; while Nott, with a more lightly equipped column, about 7000 strong, advanced by Khelat-i-Ghilji against Ghazni. This offensive movement appears to have taken the Afghans at first by surprise; and it was not till he arrived within thirty-eight miles of Ghazni that General Nott found his progress opposed (August 30) by 12,000 men under the governor, Shams-o-deen Khan, a cousin of Mohammed Akhbar. The dispersion of this tumultuary array was apparently accomplished (as far as can be gathered from the extremely laconic despatches of the General,) without much difficulty; and, on the 6th of September, after a sharp skirmish in the environs, the British once more entered Ghazni. In the city and neighbouring villages were found not fewer than 327 sepoy of the former garrison, which had been massacred to a man, according to report, immediately after the surrender: but notwithstanding this evidence of the moderation with which the Afghans had used their triumph, General Nott, in obedience, as is said, to the *positive tenor of his instructions*, “directed the city of Ghazni, with the citadel and the whole of its works, to be destroyed;” and this order appears, from the engineer’s report, to have been rigorously carried into effect. The famous sandal-wood portals of the tomb of Mahmood Shah, the first Moslem conqueror of Hindostan, were carried off as trophies: the ruins of Ghazni were left as a monument of British vengeance; and General Nott, resuming his march, and again routing Shams-o-deen Khan at the defiles of Myden, effected his junction with General Pollock, on the 17th of September, at Cabul; whence the united corps, together mustering 18,000 effective men, were to take the route for Hindostan through the Punjab early in October.

Such have been the principal events of the brief but brilliant campaign which has concluded the Afghan war, and which, if

regarded solely in a military point of view, must be admitted to have amply vindicated the lustre of the British arms from the transient cloud cast on them by the failures and disasters of last winter.

The Afghan tragedy, however, may now, we hope, be considered as concluded, so far as relates to our own participation in its crimes and calamities; but for the Afghans themselves, "left to create a government in the midst of anarchy," there can be at present little chance of even comparative tranquillity, after the total dislocation of their institutions and internal relations by the fearful torrent of war which has swept over the country. The best atonement now in our power to make, both to the people and the ruler whom we have so deeply injured, as well as the best course for our own interests, would be at once to release Dost Mohammed from the unmerited and ignominious confinement to which he has been subjected in Hindostan, and to send him back in honour to Cabul; where his own ancient partisans, as well as those of his son, would quickly rally round him, and where his presence and accustomed authority might have some effect in restraining the crowd of fierce chiefs, who will be ready to tear each other to pieces as soon as they are released from the presence of the *Feringhis*. There would thus be at least a possibility of obtaining a nucleus for the re-establishment of something like good order; while in no other quarter does there appear much prospect of a government being formed which might be either "approved by the Afghans themselves," or "capable of maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring states." If the accounts received may be depended upon, our troops had scarcely cleared the Kojuck Pass, on their way from Candahar to the Indus, when that city became the scene of a contest between the Prince Seifdar-Jung and the Barukzye chiefs in the vicinity; and though the latter are said to have been worsted, there can be little doubt that our departure will be the signal for the speedy return of the quondam *Sirdars*, or rulers of Candahar, brothers of Dost Mohammed, who have found an asylum in Persia since their expulsion in 1839, but who will scarcely neglect so favourable an opportunity for recovering their lost authority. Another competitor may still, perhaps, be

found in the same quarter—one whose name, though sufficiently before the public a few years since, has now been almost forgotten in the strife of more mighty interests. This is Shah Kamran of Herat, who certainly would have at this moment a better chance than he has ever yet had, for regaining at least Candahar and Western Afghanistan. He was said to be on the point of making the attempt after the repulse of the Persians before Herat, just before our adoption of Shah Shooja; and his title to the crown is at least as good as that of the late Shah, or any of his sons. It will be strange if this prince, whose danger from Persia was the original pretext for crossing the Indus, should be the only one of all the parties concerned, whose condition underwent no ultimate change, through all the vicissitudes of the tempest which has raged around him.

Nor are the elements of discord less abundant and complicated on the side of Cabul. The defeat of Tazeen will not, any more than the preceding ones, have annihilated Akhbar Khan and his confederate chiefs:—they are still hovering in the Kohistan, and will doubtless lose no time in returning to Cabul as soon as the retreat of the English is ascertained. It is true that the civil wars of the Afghans, though frequent, have never been protracted or sanguinary:—like the Highlanders, as described by Bailie Nicol Jarvie, “though they may quarrel among themselves, and gie ilk ither ill names, and may be a slash wi’ a claymore, they are sure to join in the long run against a’ civilised folk:”—but it is scarcely possible that so many conflicting interests, now that the bond of common danger is removed, can be reconciled without strife and bloodshed. It is possible, indeed, that Futteh-Jung (whom the last accounts state to have remained at Cabul when our troops withdrew, in the hope of maintaining himself on the musnud, and who is said to be the most acceptable to the Afghans of the sons of Shah Shooja) may be allowed to retain for a time the title of king; but he had no treasure, and few partisans; and the rooted distaste of the Afghans for the titles and prerogatives of royalty is so well ascertained, that Dost Mohammed, even in the plenitude of his power, never ventured to assume them. All speculations on these points, however, can at present amount to

nothing more than vague conjecture ; the troubled waters must have time to settle, before anything can be certainly prognosticated as to the future destinies of Afghanistan.

The kingdom of the Punjab will now become the barrier between Afghanistan and our north-western frontier in India ; and it is said that the Sikhs, already in possession of Peshawar and the rich plain extending to the foot of the Khyber mountains, have undertaken in future to occupy the important defiles of this range, and the fort of Ali-Musjid, so as to keep the Afghans within bounds. It seems to us doubtful, however, whether they will be able to maintain themselves long, unaided, in this perilous advanced post : though the national animosity which subsists between them and the Afghans is a sufficient pledge of their good-will for the service—and their co-operation in the late campaign against Cabul has been rendered with a zeal and promptitude affording a strong contrast to their lukewarmness at the beginning of the war, when they conceived its object to be the re-establishment of the monarchy and national unity of their inveterate foes. But the vigour of the Sikh kingdom, and the discipline and efficiency of their troops, have greatly declined in the hands of the present sovereign, Shere Singh, who, though a frank and gallant soldier, has little genius for civil government, and is thwarted and overborne in his measures by the overweening power of the minister, Rajah Dhian Singh, who originally rose to eminence by the favour of Runjeet. At present, our information as to the state of politics in the Punjab is not very explicit, the intelligence from India during several months having been almost wholly engrossed by the details of the campaign in Afghanistan ; but as far as can be gathered from these statements, the country has been brought, by the insubordination of the troops, and the disputes of the maharajah and his minister, to a state not far removed from anarchy. It is said that the fortress of Govindghur, where the vast treasures amassed by Runjeet are deposited, has been taken possession of by the malecontent faction, and that Shere Singh has applied for the assistance of our troops to recover it ; and the *Delhi Gazette* even goes so far as to assert that this prince, “ disgusted with the perpetual turmoil in which he is embroiled,

and feeling his incapacity of ruling his turbulent chieftains, is willing to cede his country to us, and become a pensioner of our Government." But this announcement, though confidently given, we believe to be at least premature. That the Punjab must inevitably, sooner or later, become part of the Anglo-Indian empire, either as a subsidiary power, like the Nizam, or directly, as a province, no one can doubt; but its incorporation at this moment, in the teeth of our late declaration against any further extension of territory, and at the time when the Sikhs are zealously fulfilling their engagements as our allies, would be both injudicious and unpopular in the highest degree.

The only permanent accession of territory, then, which will result from the Afghan war, will consist in the extension of our frontier along the whole course of the Sutlej and the Lower Indus—"the limits which nature appears to have assigned to the Indian empire"—and in the altered relations with some of the native states consequent on these arrangements. As far as Loodiana, indeed, our frontier on the Sutlej has long been well established, and defined by our recognition of the Sikh kingdom on the opposite bank;—but the possessions of the chief of Bhawalpoor, extending on the left bank nearly from Loodiana to the confluence of the Sutlej with the Indus, have hitherto been almost exempt from British interference;* as have also the petty Rajpoot states of Bikaneer, Jesulmeer, &c., which form oases in the desert intervening between Sind and the provinces more immediately under British control. These, it is to be presumed, will now be summarily taken under the *protection* of the Anglo-Indian Government:—but more difficulty will probably be experienced with the fierce and imperfectly subdued tribes of Belooches, inhabiting the lower valley of the Indus:—and, in order to protect the commerce of the river, and maintain the undisputed command of its course, it will be necessary to retain a sufficient extent of vantage-ground on the further bank,

* Bhawalpoor is so far under British protection, that it was saved from the arms of the Sikhs by the treaty with Runjeet Singh, which confined him to the other bank of the Sutlej; but it has never paid allegiance to the British Government. Its territory is of considerable extent, stretching nearly 300 miles along the river, by 100 miles' average breadth; but great part of the surface consists of sandy desert.

and to keep up in the country an amount of force adequate to the effectual coercion of these predatory races. For this purpose, a *place d'armes* has been judiciously established at Sukkur, a town which, communicating with the fort of Bukkur on an island of the Indus, and with Roree on the opposite bank, effectually secures the passage of the river; and the ports of Kurrachee and Sonmeani on the coast, the future marts of the commerce of the Indus, have also been garrisoned by British troops.

It has long since been evident* that Sind, by that *principle of unavoidable expansion* to which we have so often had occasion to refer, must eventually have been absorbed into the dominions of the Company; but the process by which it at last came into our hands is so curious a specimen of our Buonapartean method of dealing with reluctant or refractory neutrals, that we cannot pass it altogether without notice. Sind, as well as Beloochistan, had formed part of the extensive empire subdued by Ahmed Shah, the founder of the Doorauni monarchy; but in the reign of his indolent son Timour, the Afghan yoke was shaken off by the *Ameers*, or chiefs of the Belooch family of Talpoor, who, fixing their residences respectively at Hyderabad, Meerpoor, and Khyrpoor, defied all the efforts of the kings of Cabul to reduce them to submission, though they more than once averted an invasion by the promise of tribute. It has been rumoured that Shah-Shooja, during his long exile, made repeated overtures to the cabinet of Calcutta for the cession of his dormant claims to the *suzeraineté* of Sind, in exchange for an equivalent, either pecuniary or territorial; but the representations of a fugitive prince, who proposed to cede what was not in his possession, were disregarded by the rulers of India; and even in the famous manifesto preceding the invasion of Afghanistan, Lord Auckland announced, that "a guaranteed independence, on favourable conditions, would be tendered to the Ameers of Sind." On the appearance of our army on the border, however, the Ameers demurred, not very unreasonably, to the passage of this formi-

* So well were the Sindians aware of this, that Burnes, when ascending the Indus, on his way to Lahore, frequently heard it remarked, "Sind is now gone, since the English have seen the river, which is the road to its conquest."

dable host ; and considerable delay ensued, from the imperfect information possessed by the British commanders of the amount of resistance to be expected ; but at last the country and fortress were forcibly occupied ; the seaport of Kurrachee (where alone any armed opposition was attempted) was bombarded and captured by our ships of war ; and a treaty was imposed at the point of the bayonet on the Sindian rulers, by virtue of which they paid a contribution of twenty-seven laks of rupees (nearly 300,000*l.*) to the expenses of the war, under the name of arrears of tribute to Shah-Shooja ; acknowledging, at the same time, the supremacy, *not of Shah-Shooja*, but of the English Government ! The tolls on the Indus were also abolished, and the navigation of the river placed, by a special stipulation, wholly under the control of British functionaries. Since this summary procedure, our predominance in Sind has been undisturbed, unless by occasional local commotions ; but the last advices state that the whole country is now “ in an insurrectionary state ;” and it is fully expected that an attempt will ere long be made to follow the example of the Afghans, and get rid of the intrusive *Feinghis* ; in which case, as the same accounts inform us, “ the Ameers will be sent as state-prisoners to Benares, and the territory placed wholly under British administration.”

But whatever may be thought of the strict legality of the conveyance, in virtue of which Sind has been converted into an integral part of our Eastern empire, its geographical position, as well as its natural products, will render it a most valuable acquisition, both in a commercial and political point of view. At the beginning of the present century, the East India Company had a factory at Tatta (the Pattala of the ancients), the former capital of Sind, immediately above the Delta of the Indus ; but their agents were withdrawn during the anarchy which preceded the disruption of the Doorani monarchy. From that period till the late occurrences, all the commercial intercourse with British India was maintained either by land-carriage from Cutch, by which mode of conveyance the opium of Malwa and Marwar (vast quantities of which are exported in this direction) chiefly found its way into Sind and Beloochistan ; or by country vessels of a peculiar build, with a disproportionately lofty poop, and an

elongated bow instead of a bowsprit, which carried on an uncertain and desultory traffic with Bombay and some of the Malabar ports. To avoid the dangerous sandbanks at the mouths of the Indus, as well as the intricate navigation through the winding streams of the Delta (the course of which, as in the Mississippi, changes with every inundation), they usually discharged their cargoes at Kurrachee, whence they were transported sixty miles overland to Tatta, and there embarked in flat-bottomed boats on the main stream. The port of Kurrachee, fourteen miles N.W. from the Pittee, or western mouth of the Indus, and Sonmeani, lying in a deep bay in the territory of Lus, between forty and fifty miles further in the same direction, are the only harbours of import in the long sea-coast of Beloochistan; and the possession of them gives the British the undivided command of a trade which, in spite of the late disasters, already promises to become considerable, and which deserves, indeed, all the fostering care of the Indian Government; since these ports must inevitably be, at least for some years to come, the only inlet for Indian produce into Beloochistan, Cabul, and the wide regions of Central Asia beyond them. The overland carrying trade through Sind and the Punjab, in which (according to M. Masson) not less than 6,500 camels were annually employed, has been almost annihilated—not only by the confusion arising from the war, but from the absolute want of means of transport, from the unprecedented destruction of the camels occasioned by the exigencies of the commissariat, &c. The rocky defiles of Afghanistan were heaped with the carcasses of these indispensable animals, 50,000 of which (as is proved by the official returns) perished in this manner in the course of three years; and some years must necessarily elapse before the chasm thus made in the numbers of the species throughout North-western India can be supplied. The immense expenditure of the Army of Occupation, at the same time, brought such an influx of specie into Afghanistan as had never been known since the sack of Delhi by Ahmed Shah Doorani—while the traffic with India being at a stand-still, for the reasons we have just given, the superfluity of capital thus produced was driven to find an outlet in the northern markets of Bokhara and Turkestan. The con-

sequence of this has been, that Russian manufactures to an enormous amount have been poured into these regions, by way of Astrakhan and the Caspian, to meet this increasing demand ; and the value of Russian commerce with Central Asia, which (as we pointed out in April, 1840) had for many years been progressively declining, was doubled during 1840 and 1841, (*Bombay Times*, April 2, 1842,) and is believed to be still on the increase ! The opening of the navigation of the Indus, with the exertions of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce to establish dépôts on its course, and to facilitate the transmission of goods into the surrounding countries, has already done much for the restoration of traffic in this direction, in spite of the efforts of the Russian agents in the north to keep possession of the opening thus unexpectedly afforded them ; but it cannot be denied that the " great enlargement of our field of commerce," so confidently prognosticated by Lord Palmerston, from " the great operations undertaken in the countries lying west of the Indus," has run a heavy risk of being permanently diverted into other channels, by the operation of the causes detailed above.

Before we finally dismiss the subject of the Afghan war and its consequences, we cannot overlook one feature in the termination of the contest, which is of the highest importance, as indicating a return to a better system than that miserable course of reduction and parsimony, which, for some years past, has slowly but surely been alienating the attachment, and breaking down the military spirit, of our native army. We refer to the distribution, by order of Lord Ellenborough, of badges of honorary distinction, as well as of more substantial rewards, in the form of augmented allowances,* &c., to the sepoy corps which have borne the brunt of the late severe campaign. Right well have these honours and gratuities been merited ; nor could any measure have been better timed to strengthen in the hearts

* By a general order, issued from Simla October 4, all officers and soldiers, of whatever grade, who took part in the operations about Candahar, the defence of Khelat-i-Ghilji, the recapture of Ghazni or Cabul, or the forcing of the Khyber Pass, are to receive a silver medal with appropriate inscriptions—a similar distinction having been previously conferred on the defenders of Jellalabad. *What is at present the value of the Order of the Doorauni Empire ?*

of the sepoys the bonds of the *Feringhi salt*, to which they have so long proved faithful. The policy, as well as the justice, of holding out every inducement which may rivet the attachment of the native troops to our service, obvious as it must appear, has in truth been of late too much neglected;* and it has become at this juncture doubly imperative, both from the severe and unpopular duty in which a considerable portion of the troops have recently been engaged, and from the widely-spread disaffection which has lately manifested itself in various quarters among the native population. We predicted in July, as the probable consequence of our reverses in Afghanistan, some open manifestation of the spirit of revolt constantly smouldering among the various races of our subjects in India; but the prophecy had already been anticipated by the event. The first overt resistance to authority appeared in Bhundelkund, a wild and imperfectly subjugated province in the centre of Hindostan, inhabited by a fierce people called Bhoondelahs. An insurrection, in which nearly all the native chiefs are believed to be implicated, broke out here early in April; and a desultory and harassing warfare has since been carried on in the midst of the almost impenetrable jungles and ravines which overspread the

* The following remarks of the *Madras United Service Gazette*, though intended to apply only to the Secunderabad disturbances, deserve general attention at present:—"We attribute the lately-diminished attachment of the sepoys for their European officers to a diminished inclination for the service, the duties whereof have of late years increased in about the same proportion that its advantages have been reduced. The cavalry soldier of the present day has more than double the work to do that a trooper had forty years ago . . . and the infantry sepoy's garrison guard-work has been for years most fatiguing at every station, from the numerical strength of the troops being quite inadequate to the duties. . . . These several unfavourable changes have gradually given the sepoy a distaste for the service, which has been augmented by the stagnant state of promotion, caused by the reductions in 1829, when one-fifth of the infantry, and one-fourth of the cavalry, native commissioned and non-commissioned officers, became supernumerary, thus effectually closing the door of promotion to the inferior grades for years to come. Hopeless of advancement, the sepoy from that time became gradually less attentive to his duties, less respectful to his superiors, as careless of a service which no longer held out any prospect of promotion. Still, however, the bonds of discipline were not altogether loosened, till Lord W. Bentinck's abolition of corporal punishment; and from the promulgation of that ill-judged order may be dated the decided change for the worse which has taken place in the character of the native soldiery."

district. The Nawab of Banda and the Bhoondee Rajah, a Moslem and a Hindoo prince, respectively of some note in the neighbourhood of the disturbed tracts, have been placed under surveillance at Allahabad as the secret instigators of these movements, "which" (says the *Agra Ukhbar*), "appear to have been regularly organised all over India, the first intimation of which was the Nawab of Kurnool's affair"—whose deposition we noticed in July. The valley of Berar, also, in the vicinity of the Nizam's frontier, has been the scene of several encounters between our troops and irregular bands of insurgents; and the restless Arab mercenaries in the Dekkan are still in arms, ready to take service with any native ruler who chooses to employ them against the *Feringhis*. In the northern provinces, the aspect of affairs is equally unfavourable. The Rohillas, the most warlike and nationally-united race of Moslems in India, have shown alarming symptoms of a refractory temper, fomented (as it has been reported) by the disbanded troopers of the 2d Bengal cavalry* (a great proportion of whom were Rohillas), and by Moslem deserters from the other regiments in Afghanistan, who have industriously magnified the amount of our losses—a pleasing duty, in which the native press, as usual, has zealously co-operated. One of the newspapers printed in the Persian language at Delhi, recently assured its readers that, at the forcing of the Khyber Pass, "six thousand Europeans fell under the sharp swords of the Faithful"—with other veracious intelligence, calculated to produce the belief that the campaign must inevitably end, like the preceding, in the defeat and extermination of the whole invading force. The fruits of these inflammatory appeals to the pride and bigotry of the Moslems, is thus painted in a letter from Rohilcund, which we quote from that excellent periodical the *Asiatic Journal* for September:—"The Mahommedans throughout Rohilcund hate us to a degree only second to what the Afghans do, their interest in whose welfare they can scarcely conceal . . . There are hundreds of heads of tribes, all of whom would rise to a man on what they considered a fitting opportunity, which they are actually thirst-

* This corps, it will be remembered, was broken for its misconduct in the battle of Purwan-Durrah, against Dost Mohammed, November 2, 1840.

ing after. A hint from their moolahs, and the display of the green flag, would rally around it every Mussulman. In March last, the population made no scruple of declaring that the *Feringhi raj* (English rule) was at an end; and some even disputed payment of the revenue, saying it was probable they should have to pay it again to another Government! They have given out a report that Akliar Khan has disbanded his army for the present, in order that his men may visit their families; but in the cold weather, when our troops will be weakened and unfit for action, he will return with an overwhelming force, aided by every Mussulman as far as Ispahan, when they will annihilate our whole force and march straight to Delhi, and ultimately send us to our ships. The whole Mussulman population, in fact, are filled with rejoicing and *hope* at our late reverses."

It may be said that we are unnecessarily multiplying instances, and that these symptoms of local fermentation are of little individual importance; but nothing can be misplaced which has a tendency to dispel the universal and unaccountable error which prevails in England, as to the *popularity of our sway in India*. The signs of the times are tolerably significant—and the apprehensions of a coming commotion which we expressed in July, as well as of the quarter in which it will probably break out, are amply borne out by the language of the best-informed publications of India. "That the seeds of discontent"—says the *Delhi Gazette*—"have been sown by the Moslems, and have partially found root among the Hindoos, is more than conjecture." And the warnings of the *Agra Ukhbar* are still more unequivocal: "Reports have reached Agra that a general rise will ere long take place in the Dekkan. There have already been several allusions made to a very extensive organisation among the native states against the British power, the resources of which will, no doubt, be stretched to the utmost during the ensuing cold season. Disaffection is wide and prevalent, and when our withdrawal from Afghanistan becomes known, it will ripen into open insurrection. With rebellion in Central India, and famine in Northern, Government have little time to lose in collecting their *energies* to meet the crisis." The increase of means which the

return of the army from Afghanistan will place at the disposal of the Governor-General, will doubtless do much in either overawing or suppressing these insurrectionary demonstrations; but even in this case the snake will have been only "scotched not killed;" and the most practical and effectual method of rendering such attempts hopeless for the future, will be the replacing the Indian army on the same efficient footing, as to numbers and composition, on which it stood before the ill-judged measures of Lord William Bentinck. The energies of the native troops have been heavily tasked, and their fidelity severely tried, during the Afghan war; and though they have throughout nobly sustained the high character which they have earned by their past achievements, the experiment on their endurance should not be carried too far. Many of the errors of past Indian administrations have already been remedied by Lord Ellenborough: and we cannot refrain from the hope, that the period of his Government will not be suffered to elapse without a return to the old system on this point also—the vital point on which the stability of our empire depends.

Such have been the consequences, as far as they have hitherto been developed, to the foreign and domestic relations of our Eastern empire, of the late memorable Afghan war. In many points, an obvious parallel may be drawn between its commencement and progress, and that of the invasion of Spain by Napoleon. In both cases, the territory of an unoffending people was invaded and overrun, in the plenitude of (as was deemed by the aggressors) irresistible power, on the pretext, in each case, that it was necessary to anticipate an ambitious rival in the possession of a country which might be used as a vantage ground against us. In both cases, the usurpation was thinly veiled by the elevation of a pageant-monarch to the throne; till the invaded people, goaded by the repeated indignities offered to their religious and national pride, rose *en masse* against their oppressors at the same moment in the capital and the provinces, and either cut them off, or drove them to the frontier. In each case the intruders, by the arrival of reinforcements, regained for a time their lost ground; and if our Whig rulers had continued longer at the helm of affairs, the parallel might have become

complete throughout. The strength and resources of our Indian empire might have been drained in the vain attempt to complete the subjugation of a rugged and impracticable country, inhabited by a fierce and bigoted population ; and an "Afghan ulcer" (to use the ordinary phrase of Napoleon himself in speaking of the Spanish war) might have corroded the vitals, and undermined the fabric, of British domination in the East. Fortunately, however, for our national welfare and our national character, better counsels are at length in the ascendant. X The triumphs which have again crowned our arms, have not tempted our rulers to resume the perfidious policy which their predecessors, in the teeth of their own original declarations, have now openly avowed, by "retaining military possession of the countries west of the Indus:" and the candid acknowledgment of the error committed in the first instance, affords security against the repetition of such acts of wanton aggression, and for adherence to the pacific policy now laid down. The ample resources of India have yet in a great measure to be explored and developed, and it is impossible to foresee what results may be attained, when (in the language of the *Bombay Times*) "wisdom guides, for good and worthy ends, that resistless energy which madness has wasted on the opposite. We now see that, even with Afghanistan as a broken barrier, Russia dares not move her finger against us—that with seventeen millions sterling thrown away, we are able to recover all our mischances, if relieved from the rulers and the system which imposed them upon us!" X

The late proclamation of Lord Ellenborough has been so frequently referred to in the foregoing pages, that for the sake of perspicuity we subjoin it in full.

"Secret Department, Simla, Oct. 1, 1842.

"The Government of India directed its army to pass the Indus, in order to expel from Afghanistan a chief believed to be hostile to British interests, and to replace upon his throne a sovereign represented to be friendly to those interests, and popular with his former subjects.

"The chief believed to be hostile became a prisoner, and the sovereign represented to be popular was replaced upon his throne; but after events which brought into question his fidelity to the Government by which he was restored, he lost, by the hands of an assassin, the throne he had only held amidst insurrections, and his death was preceded and followed by still existing anarchy.

"Disasters, unparalleled in their extent, unless by the errors in which they originated, and by the treachery by which they were completed, have in one short campaign been avenged upon every scene of past misfortune; and repeated victories in the field, and the capture of the cities and citadels of Ghazni and Cabul, have again attached the opinion of invincibility to the British arms.

"The British army in possession of Afghanistan will now be withdrawn to the Sutlej.

"The Governor-General will leave it to the Afghans themselves to create a government amidst the anarchy which is the consequence of their crimes.

"To force a sovereign upon a reluctant people, would be as inconsistent with the policy, as it is with the principles, of the British Government; tending to place the arms and resources of that people at the disposal of the first invader, and to impose the burden of supporting a sovereign without the prospect of benefit from his alliance.

"The Governor-General will willingly recognise any government approved by the Afghans themselves, which shall appear desirous and capable of maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring states.

"Content with the limits nature appears to have assigned to its empire, the Government of India will devote all its efforts to the establishment and maintenance of general peace, to the protection of the sovereigns and chiefs its allies, and to the prosperity and happiness of its own faithful subjects. ✓

⌈ "The rivers of the Punjab and the Indus, and the mountainous passes and the barbarous tribes of Afghanistan, will be placed between the British army and an enemy from the west, if indeed such an enemy there can be, and no longer between the army and its supplies. ⌋

"The enormous expenditure required for the support of a large force in a false military position, at a distance from its own frontier and its resources, will no longer arrest every measure for the improvement of the country and of the people.

"The combined army of England and of India, superior in equipment, in discipline, in valour, and in the officers by whom it is commanded, to any force which can be opposed to it in Asia, will stand in unassailable strength upon its own soil, and for ever, under the blessing of Providence, preserve the glorious empire it has won, in security and in honour. ✕

"The Governor-General cannot fear the misconstruction of his motives in thus frankly announcing to surrounding states the pacific and conservative policy of his government.

"Afghanistan and China have seen at once the forces at his disposal, and the effect with which they can be applied.

"Sincerely attached to peace for the sake of the benefits it confers upon the people, the Governor-General is resolved that peace shall be observed, and will put forth the whole power of the British government to coerce the state by which it shall be infringed."

VI.—INDIAN AFFAIRS—GWALIOR.

(Published in May, 1844.)

THE painful interest with which the arrival of every Indian mail was looked for in England during the continuance of the Afghan war, with its alternations of delusive triumphs and bloody reverses, has now almost wholly died away: the public mind, long accustomed to sup full of the horrors of the Khoord-Cabul Pass, and the atrocities of the “arch-fiend” Akhbar Khan, has subsided into apathy, and hears with indifference of the occasional defeat and enthronement of rajahs and nawabs with unpronounceable names—an employment which seems to be popularly considered in this country the ordinary duty of the servants of the Company. Yet the intelligence received during the last year from our Eastern empire, whether viewed in connection with past events, or with reference to those which are now “casting their shadows before,” might furnish abundant matter for speculation, both from the “moving incidents by field” which have marked its course, and the portents which have appeared in the political horizon. In Afghanistan all things seem gradually returning to the same state in which the British invasion found them. The sons of Shah Shooja have proved unable to retain the Royal authority, which they attempted to grasp on the retirement of the invaders; and Dost Mohammed, released from captivity (as we expressed in February, 1843, the hope that he would be), once more rules in Cabul—there destined, we trust, to end his days in honour after his unmerited misfortunes—and has shown every disposition to cultivate a good understanding with the government in India. Akhbar Khan is again established in his former government of Jellalabad; and it is said that he meditates availing himself of the present distracted state of the Sikh kingdom, to make an attempt for the recovery of Peshawur—the refusal of his father to confirm which, by a formal cession to Runjeet Singh, was one of the causes, it will be remembered, of the Afghan war. There are rumours of wars, moreover, in Transoxiana, where the King of Bokhara is said to have subdued the Uzbek kingdom of Kokan or Ferghana,

(once the patrimony of the famous Baber), and to meditate extending his conquests across the Hindoo-Koosh into Northern Afghanistan—a measure which might possibly bring him within reach of British vengeance for the wrongs of the two ill-fated envoys, Stoddart and Conolly, who, even if the rumours of their murder should prove unfounded, have been detained for years, in violation of the rights of nations, in hopeless and lingering bondage.* The Barukzye sirdars have repossessed themselves of Candahar, whence they are believed to be plotting with the dispossessed Ameer of Meerpoor in Sind against the British; while at Herat, the very *fons et origo mali*, the sons of Shah Kamran have been expelled after their father's death, by the wily vizier Yar Mohammed, who has strengthened himself in his usurpation by becoming a voluntary vassal of Persia! Thus has the Shah acquired, without a blow, the city which became famous throughout the world by its resistance to his arms; and the preservation of which, as a bulwark against the designs of Russia, was the primary object which led the British standards, in an evil hour, across the Indus. Such has been the result of all the deep-laid schemes of Lord Auckland's policy, and the equivalent obtained for the thousands of lives, and millions of treasure, lavished in support of them;—failure so complete, that but for the ruins of desolated cities, and the deep furrows of slaughter and devastation left visible through the length and breadth of the land, the whole might be regarded as a dream, from which the country had awakened, after the lapse of five years, to take up the thread of events as they were left at the end of 1838. But the connection of our Eastern empire with trans-Indian politics has also fortunately subsided once more to its former level; and, satisfied with this brief summary, we shall turn to the consideration of those points in which our own interests are more nearly implicated.

Our anticipations last year, as to the ultimate fate of Sind and its rulers, have been verified almost to the letter. The Ameers (to borrow a phrase of Napoleon's, germane to the matter) "have ceased to reign," and their territory has formally, as it already

* The death of these unfortunate officers has now been placed beyond doubt by the heroic enterprise of Dr. Wolff.

was virtually, incorporated with the Anglo-Indian empire. In our number for February 1843, we gave some account of the curious process of political alchemy by which a dormant claim for tribute, on the part of Shah Shooja, had been transmuted into an active assertion of British supremacy over the Indus and its navigation, and the appropriation of the port of Kurrachee at the mouth, and the fortified post of Sukkur on the higher part of the stream, of the river. To this arrangement the Ameers, from the first, submitted with a bad grace, which it was easy to foresee would lead, according to established rule in such cases in India, to the forfeiture of their dominions. And such has been the case; but the transfer has not been effected without an unexpected degree of resistance, in which the heroism of Sir Charles Napier, and the handful of troops under his command, against fearful numerical odds, alone prevented the repetition, on a smaller scale, of the Afghan tragedy. The proximate cause of the rupture was the refusal of the Ameers to permit the clearing away of their *shikargahs*, or hunting-grounds, which were guarded with a rigid jealousy, paralleled only by the forest laws of William the Conqueror, and extended for many miles along the banks of the Indus, in a broad belt of impenetrable jungle, at once impeding the navigation by preventing the tracking of boats, and presenting dangerous facilities for ambush. To these cherished game-preserves the Ameers clung with a desperate pertinacity, which might have moved the sympathy of an English sportsman — “admitting” (says the *Bombay Times*) “that we might strip them of their territory, occupy Hyderabad, or seize their persons without difficulty; but maintaining that they will never consent to become parties to the act of degradation we insist upon, or give their enemies the pretext for charging them with having made over to us by treaty, on any consideration whatever, the most valued portion of their territory.” A force under Sir Charles Napier was at length moved from Sukkur towards Hyderabad, with a view of intimidating them into submission; and on February 14, 1843, they affixed their seals to the draught of an agreement for giving up the *shikargahs*. But this apparent concession was only a veil for premeditated treachery. On the 15th, the Residency at

Hydrabad was attacked by 8000 men with six guns, headed by one of the Ameers; and the resident, Major Outram, after defending himself with only 100 men for four hours, forced his way through the host of his assailants, and reached Sir Charles Napier's camp. The Ameers now took the field with a force estimated at 22,000 men; but were attacked on the 17th at Meeanee, a town near the Indus above Hydrabad, by 2800 British and sepoy, and completely routed after a desperate conflict, in which the personal prowess of the British general, and his officers, was called into display in a manner for which few opportunities occur in modern warfare. The effect of the victory was decisive: the Ameers surrendered themselves prisoners of war, and were shortly afterwards sent to Bombay; the British flag was hoisted at Hydrabad; and a proclamation of the Governor-General was published at Agra, March 5, declaring the annexation to our empire of "the country on both sides of the Indus from Sukkur to the sea."

The subjugation of the new province was not yet, however, complete, as another Talpoor chief, Ameer Shere Mohammed of Meerpoor, still remained in arms; and a second sanguinary engagement was fought, March 24, in the neighbourhood of Hydrabad, in which 20,000 Beloochees were again overthrown, with great slaughter, by 6000 sepoy and English troops. The town of Meerpoor and the important fortress of Oomerkote, on the borders of the Desert, were shortly after taken; and Shere Mohammed, defeated in several partial encounters, and finding it impossible to keep the field in Sind after the loss of his strongholds, retired with the remainder of his followers up the Bolan Pass towards Candahar; and is believed, as mentioned above, to be soliciting the aid of the Barukzye chiefs of that city. It is not impossible that he may ere long give us more trouble, as he will be assured of support from all the Afghan and Belooch tribes in his rear, who would gladly embrace the opportunity of striking a covert blow against the *Feringhis*; while the fidelity of the only Belooch chief who still retains his possessions in Sind, Ali Moorad of Khyrpoor, is said to be at least doubtful. For the present, however, the British may be considered to be in undisturbed military possession of Sind; and

commerce is beginning to revive on the Indus, under the protection of the armed steamers which navigate it. But the great drawback to the value of this new acquisition is the extreme unhealthiness of the climate from the great heat, combined with the malaria generated by the vast alluvial deposits of the river; the effects of which have been so deleterious, that of 9870 men, the total force of the Bombay troops under Sir Charles Napier's command, not fewer than 2890, at the date of the January letters, were unfit for duty from sickness; and apprehensions were even entertained of a design on the part of the sirdars of Candahar, in conjunction with Shere Mohammed, to take advantage of the weakness of the garrison of Shikarpoor from disease, to plunder the town by a sudden foray. There is, indeed, a Hindostani proverb on this point, expressed in tolerably forcible language—"If Sind had previously existed, why should Allah have created hell?" and so strong is this feeling among the sepoys, that of the Bengal and Madras regiments lately ordered to relieve those returning from Sind, one (the Bengal 64th) absolutely refused to march, and has been sent down to Benares to await an investigation; and formidable symptoms of mutiny have appeared in several others. The Bombay troops, however, who are proud of the conquest effected by their own arms, are so far from sharing in this reluctance, that one regiment has even volunteered for the service; and a report is prevalent that it is in contemplation to increase the strength of the Bombay army by raising twelve or fourteen new regiments—so as to enable them to hold Sind without too much weakening the home establishment, or drawing troops from the other presidencies.

The court of Lahore has lately been the scene of a tragedy, or rather succession of tragedies, in which "kings, queens, and knaves" were disposed of in a style less resembling anything recorded in matter-of-fact history than the last scene in the immortal drama of *Tom Thumb*—a resemblance increased by the revival, in several instances, of personages whose deaths had been reported in the last batch of murders. It appears that the Maharajah, Shere Singh, had at length become jealous of the unbounded influence exercised by his all-powerful minister, Rajah Dhian Singh, who had not only assumed the control of

the revenue, but had more than once reproached the sovereign, when all the chiefs were present in full *darbar*, with his habitual drunkenness and debauchery. A quarrel ensued, and Dhian Singh retired from court to the hereditary possessions of his family among the mountains, where he could set Shere Singh at defiance; but an apparent reconciliation was effected, and in July he returned to Lahore, and made his submission. His efforts were, however, now secretly bent to the organisation of a conspiracy against the life of the Maharajah, in which the Fakir Azeez-ed-deen, a personage who had enjoyed great influence under Runjeet, and many of the principal sirdars, were implicated; and on Sept. 15th Shere Singh was shot dead on the parade-ground by Ajeet Singh, a young military chief who had been fixed upon for the assassin. The murder of the king was followed by that of the Koonwur, or heir-apparent, Pertab Singh, with all the women and children in their zenanas, even to an infant born the night before; while Dhuleep Singh, a boy ten years old, and a putative son of Runjeet, was brought out of the palace and placed on the throne. But Dhian Singh was not destined to reap the fruits of his sanguinary treason. In his first interview with Ajeet after the massacre, he was stabbed by the hand of his accomplice; who was cut off in his turn the following day, with many of the sirdars of his party, by Heera Singh, the son of Dhian, who was commander-in-chief of the army, and had immediately entered the city with his troops to avenge the death of his father.* Heera Singh now assumed the office of vizier, leaving the title of king to the puppet Dhuleep, in whose name he has since administered the government, with the assistance of his father's elder brother Goolab Singh, a powerful hill chief, who came to Lahore in November with 20,000 of his own troops, to keep the mutinous soldiers of the regular regiments in order. Meanwhile disorder and confusion reigns throughout the Punjab, which is traversed in all directions by plundering bands of Akalees (a sort of Sikh fanatics), and deserters or disbanded soldiers from the army; while General Ventura and the other European officers have

* Portraits of most of the actors in this bloody drama will be found in Osborne's *Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh*.

consulted their own safety by quitting the country; and the remainder of the vast treasures amassed by Runjeet, are lavished by Heera Singh in securing the support of the soldiery to sustain him in his perilous elevation. He is said to have sent off to the mountain strongholds of his family the famous *koh-i-noor* diamond, with great part of the royal treasure; and it was so generally supposed that he meditated ridding himself of the pageant king Dhuleep, in order to assume in his own person the ensigns of royalty, that the uncles of the young prince had made an attempt (which was, however, discovered and frustrated) to carry him off from Lahore, and place him under British protection. A strong party also exists in favour of an illegitimate son of Runjeet; and there were prevalent rumours that dissensions had broken out between Heera Singh and his uncle; and, though every care was said to be taken to prevent intelligence from Lahore reaching the British, there can be little doubt that the country is now on the eve of another revolution. It is obvious that this state of things can end only in British intervention, whether rendered necessary for the security of our own provinces, or called in by one of the contending parties—which, in either case, must lead either to the Punjab being taken wholly into our own hands, or occupied and coerced (like the Nizam's country) by a subsidiary force, under British officers, supporting on the throne a sovereign bound by treaty to our interests. An army has been assembled on the Sutlej to watch the progress of events; but the Sikhs have hitherto cautiously abstained from giving any pretext for our interference; and, as long as their disorders are confined within their own frontier, such an act would bear the aspect of wanton aggression. But though the appropriation of the Punjab, in whatever form effected, cannot be long delayed, "the pear" (to use a Napoleonic phrase) "is not yet ripe;" and we shall dismiss the subject for the present; while we turn to the consideration of the recent occurrences at Gwalior—events of which the full import is little understood in England, but which involve no less consequences than the virtual subjugation of the last native state in India which retained the semblance of an independent monarchy, and which, scarce forty years since, encountered

the British forces on equal terms at once in Hindostan and the Dekkan.

The fortunes of the mighty house of Sindiah were founded by Ranajee, who was a menial servant early in the last century in the household of the Peshwah, Bajee Rao; and is said to have first attracted his master's notice by the care with which he was found clasping to his breast, during his sleep, the slippers which had been left in his charge. He subsequently distinguished himself under the Peshwah in the famous campaigns of 1737-8 against the Mogul emperor, Mohammed Shah: and on the cession of Malwa to the Mahrattas in 1743, he received the government of that province as a *jaghir* or fief, which he transmitted at his death to his son Mahdajee. The life of this daring and politic chief would be almost identical with the history, during the same period, of Central and Upper India, in which he attained such a degree of authority as had not been held by any prince since Aurungzeeb; but we can here only briefly trace his career through the labyrinth of war and negotiation. In the disastrous defeat of Paniput (1761), where the united forces of the Mahratta confederacy were almost annihilated by the Afghans under Ahmed Shah Doorani, he received a wound which rendered him lame for life; but he soon resumed his designs on Hindostan, and in 1771 became master for a time of Delhi, and the person of the Mogul emperor, Shah Alim. In the war with the English which followed, he conciliated the esteem of the cabinet of Calcutta, by his generosity to the troops who submitted at the disgraceful convention of Worgaom, in January, 1779: and at the peace of Salbye, in 1782, his independence was expressly recognised by the British government, with which he treated as mediator and plenipotentiary for the Peshwah and the whole Mahratta nation. He had now, by the aid of a Piedmontese soldier of fortune, named De Boigne, succeeded in organising a disciplined force of infantry and artillery, directed principally by European officers, with which no native power was able to cope; and in 1785, after defeating Gholam Khadir the Rohilla, once more possessed himself of Delhi and its titular sovereign, who became his pensioner and prisoner, while Sindiah exercised in his name

supreme sway from the Ganges to the Gulf of Camboy, and from Candeish to the Sutlej. In 1790 he entered the Dekkan, and was with difficulty prevented by Nana Furnavees, the able minister of the youthful Peshwah, Madhoo Rao, from usurping the guardianship of that prince, which would have given him the same ascendancy in the Dekkan as he already held in Hindostan. But though thus at the summit of power and prosperity, he constantly affected the humility befitting the lowly origin of his house; and when at the court of Poonah, in 1791, placed himself below the hereditary nobles of the Mahratta empire, with a bundle of slippers in his hand, saying, "This is my place, and my duty, as it was my father's." In the words of Sir John Malcolm (*Central India*, i. 122), "he was the nominal slave, but the rigid master, of the unfortunate Shah Alim; the pretended friend, but the designing rival, of the house of Holkar; the professed inferior in matters of form, the real superior and oppressor of the Rajpoot princes of Central India; and the proclaimed soldier, but actual plunderer, of the family of the Peshwah."

Mahdajee Sindiah died at Poonah, in 1794, in the fifty-second year of his age; and leaving no issue, bequeathed his extensive dominions to his nephew and adopted son, Dowlut Rao Sindiah. This prince, at his accession, found himself master of an army of seventy-five disciplined battalions, mostly commanded by French officers, and forming an effective force of 45,000 men, with 300 well-equipped guns, and a vast host of irregular cavalry, armed and appointed in the native fashion; and his territories included the so-deemed impregnable fortress of Gwalior, as well as Ahmednuggur, Aurungabad, Broach, and other strong places of minor note. His influence was paramount at the court of Poonah; and while by the possession of Cuttack, on the shores of the Bay of Bengal, he interrupted the communication by land between Calcutta and Madras, his frontier on the Nerbudda pressed, on the north, the then narrow limits of the Bombay presidency, which was surrounded on all other sides by the states of his Mahratta confederates. A prince holding this commanding position seemed qualified to become the arbiter of India; but Dowlut Rao, though deficient

neither in military capacity nor talent for government, was only fourteen at the death of his predecessor, and his inexperience made him a tool in the hands of an unprincipled minister, Shirzee Rao Ghatka, who directed all his efforts to undermine, by force or intrigue, the ascendancy of the upright and patriotic Nana Furnavees at Poonah. The young Peshwah, Madhoo Rao, had perished in 1795 by a fall from the roof of his palace; and the reign of his successor, Bajee Rao, was a constant scene of confusion and bloodshed; till, after the death of Nana, in 1800, he fell completely under the control of Sindiah, who thus became the virtual head of the Mahratta confederacy. But in an attempt to crush the rising power of Jeswunt Rao Holkar, the united forces of Sindiah and the Peshwah received a complete defeat near Poonah, in Oct., 1802; and Bajee Rao, driven from his capital, sought shelter from the British, with whom he concluded, in December of the same year, the famous treaty of Bassein, by which he bound himself, as the price of his restoration to his dominions, to conform to the English political system, and admit a subsidiary force for the protection of his states.

These stipulations amounted, in fact, to the sacrifice of Mahratta independence; and the war, which from that moment became inevitable, broke out early in the following year. Sindiah, who had not been consulted on the treaty of Bassein, from the first refused to be bound by its conditions; and after some fruitless attempts at negotiation, took the field (July 1803) in conjunction with Rhagojee Bonsla, the Rajah of Berar, against the Peshwah and the English. The five months' campaign which followed, rivalled Napoleon's Prussian warfare of 1806, in the rapidity with which a great military power was struck down, by (in the words of Alison) "an uninterrupted series of victories, which conducted our eastern empire to the proud pre-eminence which it has ever since retained." Perron, who on the return of De Boigne in 1796 to Europe, had succeeded him in the government of Hindostan, and the command of Sindiah's regular troops in that quarter, was defeated by Lake at Allighur, (Aug. 29), and soon after quitted India and returned to his native country; and a second decisive victory under the walls of Delhi

(Sept. 11), opened the gates of the ancient Mogul capital to the British, and released the blind old emperor, Shah Alim, from the long thralldom in which he had been held by the French and Mahrattas. Agra, with all the arsenals and military stores was taken Oct. 17; and the desperate conflict of Laswarree (Nov. 1), consummated the triumphs of Lake by the almost total annihilation of Sindiah's regulars—seventeen battalions of whom, with all their artillery, were either destroyed or taken on the field of battle. The whole of Sindiah's possessions in Hindostan thus fell into the power of the British—whose successes in the Dekkan were not less signal and rapid. On the 23d Sept., the combined army of 50,000 men, commanded in person by Sindiah and the Rajah of Berar, including 10,000 regular infantry and 30,000 horse, with upwards of 100 guns, was attacked at ASSYÆ by 4,500 British and Sepoys under General Wellesley—and the glorious event of that marvellous action at once effectually broke the power of the confederates, and for ever established the fame of WELLINGTON. A last appeal to arms at Argaoim (Nov. 28), was attended with no better fortune to the Mahrattas; and Sindiah and his ally were compelled to sue for peace, which was concluded with the latter on the 17th, and with the former on the 30th of December. By this treaty the imperial cities of Delhi and Agra, with the protectorate of the Mogul emperor, and the whole of the *Dooab*, or territory between the Jumna and Ganges, were ceded to the British; who also acquired Cuttack on the eastern coast, and Broach on the western, with Aurungabad, Ahmednuggur, and extensive territories in the Dekkan. Sindiah, moreover, agreed to receive a British resident at his court—an office first filled by Major, afterwards Sir John Malcolm—and engaged to conform in his foreign policy to the views of the British government; ceding at the same time, certain districts for the maintenance of a subsidiary force, which, however, was not to be encamped on his territory.

During the contest with Holkar and the Bhurtpore rajah in the following year, Sindiah showed strong symptoms of hostility to the British, and had even put his troops in motion with the view of relieving Bhurtpore; but the speedy termination of the war saved him from committing himself by any overt act; and

a new treaty was signed, Nov. 1805, in confirmation of the former, with an express stipulation that the perfidious Ghatka should be excluded from his councils. He never afterwards broke with the British government; and though he was known to have maintained a correspondence with Nepal during the war of 1815, he observed a prudent neutrality in the great Mahratta and Pindarree war of 1817—18, which terminated in the total overthrow of all the other Mahratta princes. This catastrophe left him the only sovereign in India possessed of any degree of substantial independence, and with a territory which, after all the cessions, was still of great extent, though much scattered and intersected by the possessions of Holkar and other rulers; so that, as Bishop Heber describes it in 1825, “not even Swabia or the Palatinate can offer a more checkered picture of interlaced sovereignties than Meywar, and indeed all Malwa. . . . Scarcely any two villages belong to the same sovereign.” His frontier extended on the north to the Chumbul, and on the south reached Boorhanpoor and the Taptée, almost enveloping the remaining dominions of Holkar, and bordering westward on the Guikwar’s country near Baroda.

The whole superficies comprehended, in a very irregular shape, about 40,000 square miles, with a revenue supposed to exceed 2,000,000*l.*; and the army kept on foot (independent of garrisons and the British contingent) amounted to 20,000 regular infantry, with from 15,000 to 20,000 horse, and a park of 300 guns. The maintenance of this large military establishment was a grievous burden to the country, and frequently involved him in great pecuniary embarrassment; but to the end of his life it continued to be his chief care. Gwalior, where the head-quarters had been fixed since 1810, became the royal residence; and the *hushkur*, or camp, as it was called, gradually swelled into a great city. The condition of his states in the latter years of his reign, is thus characterized by the amiable prelate already quoted:—“Sindiah is himself a man by no means deficient in talents or good intentions, but his extensive and scattered territories have never been under any regular system of control; and his Mahratta nobles, though they too

are described as a better race than the Rajpoots, are robbers almost by profession, and only suppose themselves to thrive when they are living at the expense of their neighbours. Still, from his well-disciplined army and numerous artillery, his government has a stability which secures peace, at least to the districts under his own eye; and as the Pindarrees feared to provoke him, and even professed to be his subjects, his country has retained its wealth and prosperity to a greater degree than most other parts of Central India."

Dowlut Rao died at Gwalior, March 21, 1827, leaving no male issue; and with him expired the direct line of Ranajee Sindia: but he had previously empowered his widow, the Baiza Bace (a daughter of the notorious Ghatka), in conformity with a practice sanctioned by the Hindoo law, to adopt a son and successor for him, after his decease, from the other branches of the Sindiah family. Her choice fell on a youth eleven years of age, named Mookt Rao, then in a humble rank of life, who was eighth in descent from the grandfather of Ranajee; and he was accordingly installed, June 18, by the title of Jankojee Sindiah, in the presence of the British Resident and the chiefs of the army, espousing at the same time a grand-daughter of his predecessor. The regency was left, in pursuance of the last injunctions of Dowlut Rao, in the hands of the Baiza Bace, whose administration was marked by much prudence and ability; but the young Maharajah speedily became so impatient of the state of tutelage in which he found himself retained, that Lord William Bentinck, then governor-general, found it expedient to visit Gwalior as a mediator, in December 1832, in order to reconcile him to the control of his benefactress, in whom the government for life was considered to have been vested by the will of her late husband.* The remonstrances of the governor-general produced, however, but little effect. On the 10th of July 1833, a revolt, fomented by the young prince, broke out among the soldiery, whose pay had imprudently been suffered to fall into arrear; and the Baiza Bace, after a fruitless attempt at resistance, was compelled to quit the Gwalior territory. The British authorities, though they had previously shown them-

* See *Asiatic Journal*, May, 1834. P. 7, Part II.

selves favourable to her cause, declined any direct interference on her behalf; and after remaining for some time on the frontier with a body of troops which had continued faithful to her, in the hope of recovering her power by a counter-revolution, she eventually fixed her residence at Benares, leaving her ungrateful *protégé* in undisturbed possession of the government. This was administered in the manner which might have been expected from a youth suddenly raised from poverty to a throne, and destitute even of the *modicum* of education usually bestowed on Hindoos of rank. The revenues of the state were wasted by the Maharajah in low debauchery, while the administration was left almost wholly in the hands of his maternal uncle, who bore the title of Mama-Sahib; but his influence was far from adequate to repress the feuds of the refractory nobles, and the mutinies of the turbulent and ill-paid troops, who frequently made the capital a scene of violence and bloodshed. The relations with the cabinet of Calcutta continued, however, friendly; and Lord Auckland, when on his return from his famous tour to the Upper Provinces, paid a visit to Gwalior in January 1840, and was received with great pomp by the Maharajah. But the frame of Jankojee Sindiah was prematurely undermined by his excesses; and he died childless, February 7, 1843, not having completed his twenty-seventh year.

The ceremony of adopting a posthumous heir, which had taken place at the death of Dowlut Rao, was now repeated; and a boy nine years old, the nearest kinsman of the deceased sovereign, was placed on the musnud, under the name of Jeeahjee Rao Sindiah, by the *Maha-rana Baee*, or queen-dowager; who, though herself only twelve years of age, assumed the regency in conjunction with the Mama-Sahib. But little permanence could be expected in a state so constituted from the government of a child, and a man without adherents or influence, though they were recognised as regents by the British authorities:—and the catastrophe was hastened by an imprudent investigation, which the Mama-Sahib instituted, into the peculations of the Dada Khasjee, the minister of the late Maharajah. The deficit is said to have amounted to not less than three crores of rupees (3,000,000*l.*), which had probably been employed in

corrupting the troops ; and on the night of July 16, a general mutiny broke out. The Resident, finding all interference unavailing, quitted Gwalior with the Mama-Sahib, and repaired to Dholpoor near the frontier :—while the whole sovereign power was usurped by the Khasjee, who had succeeded in bringing over the young Bae to his interests, and who even sent troops and artillery to the banks of the Chumbul, to dispute, if necessary, the passage of the English. The cabinet of Calcutta now, however, considered, that the attitude of hostility which had been assumed, as well as the expulsion of a minister who was in some measure under British guarantee, justified a departure from the principle of non-intervention which had hitherto been invariably acted upon with regard to the internal affairs of the state of Gwalior. A considerable force, under the title of an *Army of exercise*, was assembled at Agra, where the commander-in-chief, Sir Hugh Gough, arrived Oct. 21, and was joined, Dec. 11, by the governor-general himself, who appears to have regarded the settlement of the once-mighty realm of Sindiah as a “*dignus vindice divo nodus*” requiring his immediate presence. The Gwalior *durbar*, meanwhile, presented a scene of mingled tumult and panic—some of the officers having formed a party hostile to the usurping Khasjee, while the mutinous soldiery loudly clamoured against submission ; and letters were dispatched to the Rajpoot and Bhoondela chiefs, soliciting their aid to repel the threatened invasion of the Feringhis. At a council held Dec. 7, the most warlike sentiments prevailed ; and some of the military leaders proposed that the British should be suffered to pass the Chumbul and besiege Gwalior, while the Mahrattas, getting round their rear, were to pour down on Agra and Delhi, and raise the Hindoo population ! But the news of the governor-general’s arrival struck them with consternation, and vakeels were sent to Agra, to learn on what terms a pacification might yet be effected. The envoys had an audience of the governor-general on the 13th ; but the march of the troops had commenced the day before, and was not countermanded even on the surrender of the Khasjee, who was brought in chains to Dholpoor on the 17th—the military chiefs opposed to him having persuaded or

compelled the Bace to give him up—and he was immediately sent off as a state-prisoner to Agra.

The army, meanwhile, had entered the Gwalior territory, and a proclamation was issued, declaring that it appeared “not as an enemy, but as a friend to the Maharajah, bound by treaty to protect his highness’s person, and to maintain his sovereign authority against all who are disobedient and disturbers of the peace.” The insurgent chiefs, who appear to have confidently expected that the British would withdraw as soon as the Khasjee was given up, now made fresh attempts at negotiation; and matters were apparently so far arranged, that preparations were made for the reception of the Bace, in camp, on the 28th. But it was soon evident that these overtures had been made only for the sake of gaining time; and after a halt of five days, which had been actively employed by the Mahrattas, the troops resumed their advance upon Gwalior, accompanied by the governor-general in person. On the 29th of December, the two divisions under the commander-in-chief and General Grey, moving on separate lines of march, found the enemy drawn up in well-chosen positions at Maharajpooor and Punniar, and prepared to resist their progress. The British and Sepoy effective strength was about 14,000 men, with forty guns, and a small body of cavalry: the Mahratta infantry was nearly equal in number; but they had 3000 horse, and all the advantages of a strong position, on heights protected in front by difficult ravines, and defended by a hundred pieces of excellently served artillery. The conflict appears to have been the severest which had been seen in India since Laswarree and Assye. The Mahrattas (as described in the official accounts of Sir Hugh Gough, who admits that he “had not done justice to the gallantry of his opponents,”) after their intrenchments and batteries had been carried by the bayonet, with severe loss to the assailants “received the shock without flinching; and fought, sword in hand, with the most determined courage.” But they were at last driven from their ground, with great carnage, by the superior prowess of the Anglo-Indian troops, whose double victory was dearly purchased by the loss of more than 1000 killed and wounded, including an unusual proportion of officers. All

resistance was now at an end: Gwalior, "the Gibraltar of the East," was entered without opposition; and a treaty was concluded, Jan. 10, ratified by the governor-general and the restored regent, "for securing the future tranquillity of the common frontier of the two states, establishing the just authority of the Maharajah's government, and providing for the proper exercise of that authority during his highness's minority." The defeated army was to be in great part disbanded, and an additional contingent force levied, of seven regiments of infantry and two of cavalry, with twenty guns—a proportionate extent of territory, we presume, being ceded for its maintenance, as usual in such cases: exchanges were further made of certain frontier districts, for the mutual convenience of the two contracting powers; and last, not least, the expenses of the campaign were to be disbursed forthwith from the Gwalior treasury. Everything being thus settled satisfactorily, at least to one party, the troops were to retire, without loss of time, within the British frontier, leaving the internal administration in the hands of the Mama-Sahib and the Bacc; and the governor-general was to set out from Gwalior on the 17th of January, on his return to Calcutta. Thus the expedition, both in a diplomatic and military point of view, was crowned with complete success. We must now proceed to examine it in its political bearings.

The proclamation of British supremacy over India by the Marquis of Hastings, after the conclusion, in 1818, of the war with the Mahrattas and Pindarrees, amounted to an assumption on the part of the Company of the same position relative to the native powers, as had been held by the monarchs of the house of Timoor—who, from the conquest of Delhi by Baber, adopted the title of Padishah or emperor, as lords-paramount of India, and lost no opportunity of enforcing the *imperial* rights, thus asserted, against the other Hindoo and Moslem princes among whom the country was divided; till after a century and a half of incessant aggressive warfare, Aurungzeeb succeeded in uniting under his rule the whole of Hindostan and the Dekkan, from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin. Less than half that period sufficed for the establishment of the Anglo-Indian

empire on a far firmer basis than that of the Moguls had ever attained; and if the same claim of indefeasible *suzeraineté*, which was set forward by their Moslem predecessors, had been openly advanced and avowed as a principle, as it has long been acted upon *de facto*, it would have been at once far more candid, and far more intelligible to the natives, than the course which has been pursued, of grounding every aggression on some pretended infraction of a compulsory treaty. The recent case of Gwalior affords a strong illustration of the point which we are endeavouring to establish, as the relations of that state with the supreme government have hitherto been different from those of the Indian sovereignties in general. While the other native princes (with the exception only of the Rajpoot chiefs of Bikaner, Jesulmeer, &c., who lay beyond what might till lately be considered the British boundary) had surrendered the military possession of their territories, almost entirely, to subsidiary corps under the control of the Company, the dynasty of Sindiah alone (though British influence had been more sensibly exercised under the feeble rule of Jankojee than during the life of Dowlut Rao) still preserved its domestic independence almost untouched, and kept on foot a powerful army, besides the contingent which it was bound by treaty to maintain—the only other mark of dependence being the obligation not to contract alliances hostile to British interests. If we are to regard the late transactions in this point of view, it will be difficult to justify the invasion of an *independent* and friendly state on no other ground than our disapprobation of a change of ministry, accompanied, though it may have been, with the tumult and violence which are the usual concomitants of an Asiatic revolution. But if the Company (as we conceive to be the *practical* aspect of the question) are held to be at the present day the recognised, as well as the *de facto*, representatives of the Mogul monarchs, there can be no doubt that, on the death of Jankojee Sindiah, his dominions might fairly have been annexed to the Anglo-Indian empire as a lapsed fief which had reverted to the suzerain by the failure of heirs. From the death of Dowlut Rao Sindia, indeed, the Gwalior state had presented a scene of anarchy and misgovernment, to which allusion is made in the

proclamation of the governor-general;* and which, from the impunity it afforded to the remnant of the Pindarrees and other marauders, and the consequent insecurity of life and property both in the interior and on the frontier, was intolerable alike to its neighbours and to its own subjects. Under these circumstances, the acquiescence of the cabinet of Calcutta in a second adoption of a child, to fill the throne of a kingdom already brought to the verge of ruin by the vices and incapacity of the former occupant, can be regarded in no other light than as an injudicious stretch of forbearance, injurious to our own interests, and uncalled for by those of the state thus subjected to a continuance of misrule; and it is to be regretted, that our late victories have not been followed up by the formal occupation of the country, and the establishment of the order and strong government to which it has long been a stranger. No other result can be anticipated from the half measures which have been adopted, than the creation of a state of confusion and resistance to authority, similar to that which prevails in the distracted kingdom of Oude—ending inevitably, though perhaps at the expense of a fresh contest, in its incorporation with the dominions of the Company. Meanwhile (as observed in the *Times* of March 8th), “we have roused the passions of the Mahrattas against their sovereign and against ourselves; but we have not taken that opportunity which the moment of victory gave us, of effectuating a government essentially strong and beneficial to the governed. The time, therefore, we may expect will come when a second interference will be demanded, both by the recollection of our present conquest and the incompleteness of its consequences; and we shall be doomed to find, that we have won two hard-fought battles merely to enforce the necessity of a third.”

* “The want of cordial co-operation on the part of the officers of the Gwalior state, in the maintenance of order on the frontier, had long been a subject of just remonstrance, and various orders had been issued by the late Maharajah, in accordance with the representations of the British Resident. These orders had but too often remained without due execution; but in consideration of the long illness of his highness, and the consequent weakness of his administration, the British government had not pressed for satisfaction with all the rigour which the importance of the subject would have warranted.”

The late campaign, short as it has fortunately been, becomes important, if viewed with reference to a subject to which we have more than once before alluded, but which cannot be too often or too prominently brought before the British public, who should never be suffered to lose sight of the great truth, that it is *by our military power alone* that we hold our Indian empire. It is evident from all the circumstances, not less than from the candid confession of Sir Hugh Gough himself, that the determined resistance opposed by the Gwalior troops (whom of late years it has been the fashion in the Indian army to speak of as "Sindiah's rabble,") and the discipline and valour shown in the defence of their positions, were wholly unexpected by their assailants. But the prowess and unflinching resolution displayed at Maharajpore and Punniar, under all the disadvantages of a desperate cause and inefficient commanders, were worthy of the troops of De Boigne and Perron in their best days, and amply prove that the Mahrattas of the present day have not degenerated from their fathers, whose conduct at Assye won the praise of the great Duke himself.* The defeat of a British force in a pitched battle on the soil of India, would be a calamity of which no man could calculate the consequences; yet such a result would not have been impossible, if the contempt of our commanders for the enemy had brought them to the encounter with inadequate numbers; and the rulers of India have reason to congratulate themselves that this underrated force remained quiescent during our Afghan disasters, when intrigue and difficulties were at their height among both Hindoos and Moslems, and every disposable regiment was engaged beyond the Indus, in a warfare, of the speedy termination of which there then appeared little prospect; while the Moslems, both of the north and south, in Rohilcund and the Dekkan, were on the verge of insurrection, and the Rajah of Sattarah, the representative of the former head of that great Mahratta confederacy, of which Sindiah was then the only member retaining any degree of

* "Our action on the 23d Sept. was the most severe battle that I have ever seen, or that I believe has been fought, in India. The enemy's cannonade was terrible, but the result shows what a small number of British Troops will do."—*The Duke of Wellington to Colonel Murray, Gurwood's Dispatches*, i. 414. "It was not possible for any man to lead a body into a hotter fire than he did the piequets that day at Assye."—*Letter to Colonel Munro, ib.* 403.

independence, was busied in conspiracies, the absurdity of the proposed means for which was not* (as some of his advocates in England attempted to maintain) a proof of their non-existence. Had the old Mahratta spirit been then alive in the breast of the degenerate successor of Dowlut Rao, the appearance in the field of 20,000 troops with a considerable share of discipline, and a numerous and excellent artillery, might at once have given the signal, and formed a nucleus, for a rising which would have comprehended almost every man who could bear arms, and would have shaken to the centre, if not overthrown utterly, the mighty fabric of our Eastern empire. It is true that the indolent and sensual character of Jankojee Sindiah gave no grounds for apprehension at the time; and the period of danger has now passed away; nor is it probable that the Gwalior army, even if left at its present strength, can ever again be in a situation to give trouble to our government. But it is not less true, that when our difficulties were greatest, a disciplined force did exist, in a position the most central in India, which might have turned the quivering beam, if it had been thrown into the scale against us in the moment of extreme peril.†

It is, therefore, with far different feelings from those expressed by some of the newspaper scribes, both in India and England, that we heard the declaration ascribed to the present governor-general, on his arrival in India, "that the army should be his first care;"‡ and have witnessed the spirit in which it has since been acted upon. "India," again to quote his own words on a

* See page 77.

† The strength of the Mahratta army, at the time of Lord Auckland's visit, was estimated at 35,000 men of all arms, including 15,000 irregular cavalry and 250 guns, besides the *Ekhas*, or body-guard of 500 nobles, privileged to sit in the sovereign's presence, who were subsequently disbanded by Jankojee for disaffection. The infantry was divided into four brigades, and consisted of thirty-four regular regiments of 600 men each, and five regiments of irregular foot, or *nujeels*. A few of Dowlut Rao's French officers still survived; the remainder were their sons and grandsons, and adventurers from all parts of the earth. Not fewer than 25,000 troops, with nearly all the artillery, were generally at headquarters in the *lushkur*, or camp, of Gwalior.—See *Asiatic Journal*, May, 1840.

‡ "We see much more of Toryism than of truth in this opinion," observes the *Eastern Star*, as quoted in the *Asiatic Journal* for December; "and we believe the man who entertains it, the last who should ever be entrusted with power in this empire. It is as dangerous a delusion as it would be to imagine we could do without an army at all."—Pro-di-gi-ous!

late public occasion, "was won by the sword, and must be kept by the sword;" yet the military spirit of the army, on which the preservation of our empire depends, had been damped, and its efficiency wofully impaired by the injudicious reductions introduced by Lord William Bentinck, and persevered in by his successor; and the reverses and losses of the Afghan war, following close in the train of these ill-advised measures, had produced a disaffection for the service, and deterioration in the *morale* of the sepoy, from which evil auguries were drawn by those best acquainted with the peculiar temperament of the native soldiery.* The efforts of Lord Ellenborough have been from the first directed to remove this unfavourable impression of neglect from the minds of the troops; and the heroism displayed by the sepoy under his own eye, in the late desperate encounters before Gwalior, must have brought home to his mind the gratifying conviction that his efforts had not been in vain. We noticed with satisfaction last year, the well-deserved honours and rewards distributed to the corps, by whose exploits the transient cloud thrown over our arms in Afghanistan had been cleared away; and the same course has been worthily followed up in the decorations cast from the captured Mahratta cannon, and conferred, without distinction of officers or men, British or Sepoy, on the victors of Maharajpore and Punniar; as well as in the triumphal monuments to be erected at Bombay for the victories in Sind, and at Calcutta for those before Gwalior. But while we render full justice to the valour, patience, and fidelity of the sepoy infantry, now deservedly rewarded by participation in those honours from which they have been too long excluded, the truth remains unchanged of that of which Lake, and many others since Lake of those who best knew India, have in vain striven to impress the conviction on the authorities at home—the paramount importance of a large intermixture of *British* troops. "I am convinced that, *without King's troops*, very little is to be expected . . . there ought always to be at least one European battalion to four native ones: this I think necessary." And again, in his despatch to the Marquis Wellesley, the day after the

* See an extract from the *Madras United Service Gazette*, note in page 114.

arduous conflict at Laswarree—"The action of yesterday has convinced me how impossible it is to do any thing without British troops; and of them there ought to be a very great proportion." It is true that the regulation lately promulgated by the Duke of Wellington, that the heavy cavalry regiments shall in future take their turn of Indian service, will in some measure remedy the evil in that branch where it is most felt; and will at once increase their military strength in India, and diminish the length of absence of the different corps from Europe. The misconduct of the native regular cavalry, indeed, on more than one occasion during the late Afghan war, has shown that they are not much to be depended upon when resolutely encountered. They are ill at ease in the European saddles, and have no confidence in the regulation swords when opposed to the trenchant edge of the native *tulwars*; while, on the other hand, the laurels earned by Skinner's, Hearsay's, and other well-known corps of irregular horse, might almost have induced the military authorities in India to follow the example of the Mahrattas, who never attempted to extend to their cavalry the European discipline which they bestowed on their infantry. The sepoy infantry has ever been *sans peur et sans reproche*; yet, though some of the most distinguished regiments of the Bengal army were in the field before Gwalior, the honour of storming the death-dealing batteries of Maharajpore, was reserved for the same gallant corps which led the way to victory under Clive at Plassey—her Majesty's 39th—and which has now once more proved its title to the proud motto emblazoned on its standards, *Primus in Indis*! The words of Lord Lake (to refer to him once more), in his account of the battle of Delhi, might have been adopted without variation by Lord Ellenborough in describing the late actions. "The sepoys have behaved excessively well; but from my observations on this day, as well as every other, it is impossible to do great things in a gallant and quick style without Europeans;" and we trust that, whenever the time shall arrive for the return of the present governor-general to Europe, he will not fail to avail himself of the weight which his personal experience will give him in the councils of the nation, to enforce the adoption of a measure

which, sooner or later, will inevitably become one of absolute necessity.*

No former governor-general of India entered on his office—at all times the most arduous under the British crown—under such unfavourable auspices, and with such a complicated accumulation of difficulties to combat, as Lord Ellenborough; few, if any, of his predecessors have had their actions, their motives, and even their words, exposed to such an unsparing measure of malicious animadversion and wilful misconstruction; yet none have passed so triumphantly through the ordeal of experience. Many of his measures may now be judged of by their fruits; and those of the Calcutta press, † who were loudest in their cavils, compelled to admit the success which has attended them, are reduced to aim their censures at the alleged magniloquence of the governor-general's proclamations; which, it should always be remembered in England, are addressed to a population accustomed to consider the bombast of a Persian secretary as the *ne plus ultra* of human composition, and which are not, therefore, to be judged by the European standard of taste. Much of the hostility directed against Lord Ellenborough, is, moreover, owing to his resolute emancipation of himself from the bureaucracy of secretaries and members of council, who had been accustomed to exercise control as “viceroys over” his predecessors, and who were dismayed at encountering a man whose previously acquired knowledge of the country which he came to govern, enabled him to dispense with the assistance and dictation of this red-tape camarilla. Loud were the complaints of these gentry at what they called the despotism of the new governor-general, on finding themselves excluded from that participation in state secrets in which they had long revelled, in a country where so much advantage may be derived from knowing beforehand what is coming at headquarters. But

* It is perhaps needless to remark that this and the following passages were written before any intimation of the recall of Lord Ellenborough had transpired.

† It is now generally known that the universal hostility of the Indian press was provoked by Lord Ellenborough's having withdrawn (by instructions from the Court of Directors) the private intelligence which Lord Auckland had allowed them to receive of the forthcoming measures of Government.

much of the success of Lord Ellenborough's government may be attributed to the secrecy with which his measures were thus conceived, and the promptitude with which his personal activity and decision enabled him to carry them into effect—success of which the merit is thus due to himself alone, and to the liberty of action which he obtained by shaking off at once the etiquettes which had hitherto trammelled the Indian government. In July 1842 we ventured to pronounce, that “on the course of Lord Ellenborough's government will mainly depend the question of the future stability, or gradual decline, of our Anglo-Indian empire; and if, at the conclusion of his viceroyalty, he has only so far succeeded as to restore our foreign and domestic relations to the same state in which they stood ten years since, he will merit to be handed down to posterity by the side of Clive and Hastings.” The task has been nobly undertaken and gallantly carried through; and though time alone can show how far the present improved aspect of Indian affairs may be destined to permanency, Lord Ellenborough is at least justly entitled to the merit of having wrought the change, as far as it rests with one man to do so, by the firm and fearless energy with which he addressed himself to the enterprise.

9581 H01 R



6450

BRUNNEN
6/69
BRUNNEN

